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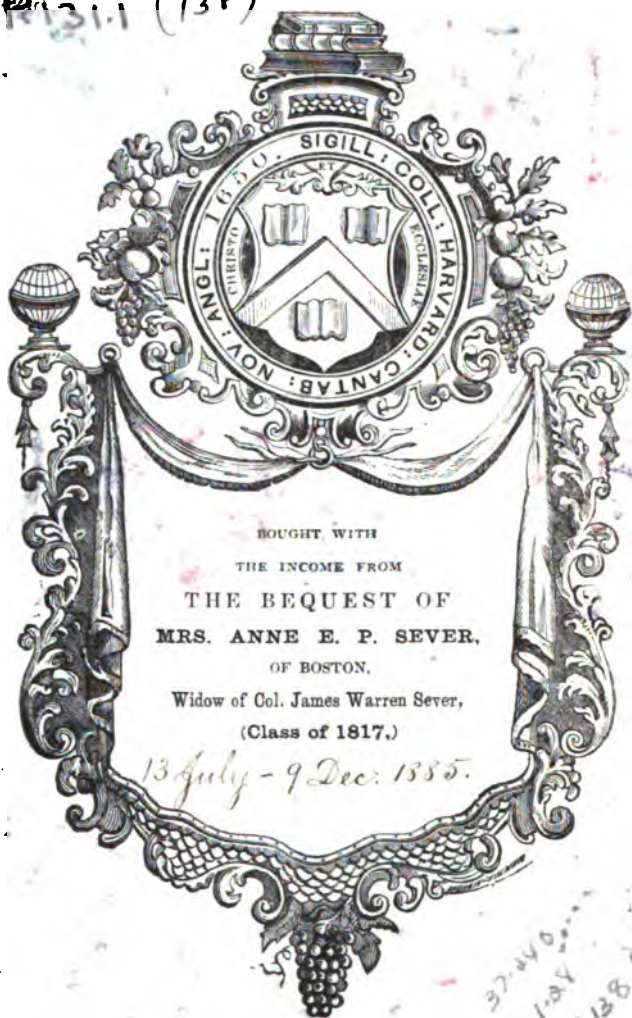
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VOL. CXXXVIII.

THE DECLINE OF ART: ROYAL ACADEMY AND
GROSVENOR GALLERY.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, could he revisit London, would encounter at least two surprises. The first might be pleasant: he would witness among the people an enthusiasm for the Fine Arts to which he had been a stranger in the last century. The second astonishment, we fear, might be painful: he would discover that his once popular Discourses had fallen out of date, and that his teachings concerning High Art had become obsolete. The lapse of a century, he would see, had brought evolutions not always securing the survival of the fittest, and transmutations in species not everywhere showing developments upwards. Imagine the sensations of the first President on approaching Burlington House, and on entering the present exhibition of the Royal Academy. Again he would be the subject of mixed emotions. He might almost stagger with amazement on beholding the mag-

nificence of the local habitation, yet would sigh when his eye met the pictures on the walls. Little in the present could recall the past; in vain would he look either for his own portrait or for his precepts. Nowhere could be discovered the Caracci whose example had been held up to the students; and naught answered to the "desire that the last word pronounced in the Academy might be the name of—Michael Angelo." In fact, all that Reynolds wrote has by some strange misapprehension been read backwards; indeed the pictures of the year might seem in malice to reverse the Discourse wherein appears the passage: "A mere copier of nature can never produce anything great—can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator. The wish of the genuine painter must be more extended; instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his

imitations, he must endeavour to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas. Instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame by captivating the imagination." Thus Reynolds might not differ widely from the dictum of Sir Charles Eastlake, pronounced at an Academy banquet—the great law of art is the law of reaction!

The salient feature in the world of art is the amazing increase of production. Galleries multiply apace, and yet artists complain that their works are crowded out. Unluckily merit does not rise in the same ratio as the growth in numbers. The art, indeed, might seem to be diluted; and of course when watered it necessarily covers a broader surface. And artists when multiplied are, it may be feared, in the condition of a population doubled, with only the same total of intellect for distribution among the swollen mass; and so, in the scramble for brains, some naturally fall short! The number of pictures now on view cannot be under 6000; and the total output in the twelve months may be set down at about 10,000. And as it does not appear that art as art gains or advances much, the end mainly answered is that the artist shall somehow live. Yet the life led is but a lottery, for as the supply rises in excess of the market demand, the few may prosper, but the many must starve. Seldom, indeed, has the sunshine which is supposed to lie around the painter's path been so darkened by shadow. Far too many labourers are in the field, and many bring to the task inadequate talents. The facilities for entering the profession, the insensate fashion which fosters whatever bears the charmed name of art, however frivolous and worth-

less it may be, crowd the lists with vainest mediocrity. And, sad to say, it is this mediocrity, endlessly multiplied, which brings down the general level. And as no commanding genius comes to take the place of artists of light and leading who one by one are swept away, darker grow the shadows which fall on our contemporary art. We want leaders strong to mould a national art. More than a quarter of a century ago we depicted "The Conflict of the Schools"; now the conflict has brought chaos.

Fairly to estimate the value of the year's art is by no means easy, yet the task admits of simplification. The worst works must be eliminated, and when the gross mass has been well winnowed, the chaff can be thrown on one side, and the good grain weighed or measured. It is really amazing among a multitude of competitors how comparatively few merit a prize—a melancholy fact known to the examiners of the many thousand drawings sent to South Kensington by the schools of art throughout the country. Surprisingly small indeed is the percentage of the pictures now on view which merit serious consideration. Take the total exhibited at 6000, 5 per cent yields 300 works, certainly a liberal estimate, considering that the Academy can hardly sum up 50 that deserve to hold a permanent place in the memory. By leaving out inferior products, and by taking into the reckoning only the best works, the final verdict will at least have the merit of proving all the more lenient.

The tendencies and shortcomings of our contemporary art are clearly pronounced; the exhibitions of the season appear for the most part as thrice-told tales; the same men,

with here and there a new recruit, hold the field, and execute with slight variations accustomed manœuvres. And on the principle that nothing succeeds like success, a fortunate picture has its replicas or sequels. Our artists fear to overtax their intellects, and so prefer subjects devoid of thought, compositions without complexities, pictorial problems, elementary as questions put in a village school. Painters, indeed, are more prone to the recreations of the playground than to the serious work of the schoolroom: they are so addicted to save their heads at the expense of their hands, that they grudge an extra five minutes for the maturing of an idea, while they willingly devote months to its manual elaboration. Thus a studio is a laboratory rather than a library, and pictures are mechanical structures more than imaginative creations. No wonder, then, that our modern art fails to move the best men of our time, and remains stagnant, while all around advances. Our galleries cannot compare with our museums of science for inventive power; and the amazing progress to which the Prince of Wales testified at the opening of the International Inventions Exhibition, is due not to discoveries in art, but to the conquests of science. Lord Macaulay was censured when he declared that theology could not be classed with the progressive sciences; but we shall hardly be charged with irreverence, if we venture on the assertion that the Fine Arts do not share in the rapid and sustained advances which mark the Useful Arts. Yet nature lies at the root of all, and the recent rise of naturalism in art might haply bring renewal of strength. Nevertheless, our artists still lag behind, and one reason may be that they

are not, in the same deep and searching sense as our men of science, the interpreters of nature. The exhibitions of the year, in fine, fall short of advanced thought, and the ideas which mould and colour the century obtain inadequate expression.

As often as May comes round, we hear repeated the question, "Is it a good Academy?" The standard on which the judgment is formed fluctuates greatly with the lapse of years. We can recall, not without a sigh, a golden age some five-and-thirty years ago, when the old rooms in Trafalgar Square rejoiced in the presence of Callcott, Collins, Turner, Etty, Mulready, Maclise, Dyce, Leslie, E. M. Ward, Webster, Poole, Landseer, Watson Gordon, John Philip, David Roberts, Creswick, and Stanfield. At this culminating period of English art, the show made by the Academy in any year might easily rise to the superlative degree of "very good." But such eras unfortunately prove brief as they are bright, and history teaches, especially in Italy, that after a dazzling ascent follows a speedy and signal fall. Unhappily in England not only did death hasten to thin the foremost ranks, but destiny by some unintelligible caprice seemed to put a stop to the creation of more genius. And few men of the first rank being ready to fill up the vacant places, elections from the second rank inevitably brought down the merit of the annual musters. This deterioration, at first hardly perceptible, when maintained over a quarter of a century accumulates into something startling. Hence the standard is so lowered that the poorest Academy of the past generation would rank as a good Academy now. Consequently a wretched Academy such as the

present may be said to be wholly without historic parallel!

Eulogy were certainly this year ill-timed, yet apology is heard. The Academy, we are told by some, is interesting, is agreeable, is full of promise; if old favourites are in decline, young men are coming forward; and if works of signal merit are few, amends are made by a good general average. Let these pleas be accepted, and yet the Academy remains far from good. The accomplished President, at the Academy banquet, puts the case with his accustomed felicity. He pleads thus: "The note which dominates in our show is variety—variety in aims and variety in expressions. May this attribute long distinguish the exhibitions of our Academy, of which comprehensiveness is the strength, and catholicity should be for ever the corner-stone!" Fine phrases, like the language of diplomacy, serve as disguises; surely "variety" scattered among the many can scarcely be the measure of the merit concentrated in the few. And "comprehensiveness," when diffused over 2134 miscellanies, may prove a little scattered as wordy wit wanting brevity, or as windy wisdom lacking reticence. Even "catholicity," instead of a corner-stone, may turn out a stumbling-block, should fallacious figment take the place of infallibility! And yet to cavil at the Royal Academy is bootless as the wasting of powder and shot on an impregnable fort. The Academy grows rich; and the public, well pleased, crowd to see the show, while Cabinet Ministers, having tasted the wines, testify to the fine flavour of the art vintage. We once heard Sir Henry Cole complain that the exhibitions at South Kensington, which they took pains to make the best, the public cared

for the least. Apparently the lesson has not been lost at Burlington House; and when it is ascertained that the best pays the worst, it were folly to improve. Reverting then to the question, "Is it a good Academy?"—the reply might be, "It is an Academy that will bring good grist to the mill!"

The public are greatly to blame: they hold the faith that the first and final purpose of the painter is to please, and so the artist surrenders his ideal and paints down to the common taste of the day. Reason and imagination are gifts comparatively rare, but the senses are organs pertaining to all sorts and conditions of men; therefore the arts pander to sensation, and, like popular politics, obtain applause by realising through low expedients the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The crowds that flock to the Academy are the reverse of critical, yet, of course, they all criticise; and not a little amusement may be gathered from listening to the sapient remarks of country cousins before the pictures, catalogues in hand. The multitude betake themselves by preference to the Academy, because they are sure of a show agreeable to their choice and cultured capacities. The pleasure received might appear to be proportionate to the number of senses called into play; and were it possible to bring all the five senses into action together, the triumph of art could go no further! Listen and you shall hear the criticism now deemed searching. An old connoisseur has been known to remark over a picture of Waterloo, that Wellington does not sit straight in the saddle, and so the critic, fresh from a ride in the Row, rejoices in his superior sense of eyesight! A gentleman-farmer, captivated by a remarkably

realistic farmyard, notices that the snout of a prominent pig actually protrudes from the canvas. In order to make sure, he gently applies his finger, and by feeling the paint gratifies the sense of touch! An old veteran fights his battles over again in face of charging cavalry and a furious battery, and pays no ill compliment to the painter when exclaiming, "By Jove! I hear the clatter of the horses' iron heels and the very roar of the guns!"—and thus a silent art has its victory in rousing the sense of sound! And it were hardly beyond the range of possibility that a gourmet should say of a picture of peaches that they made his mouth water; or that a fair florist should exclaim over a piece of flower-painting, "This nosegay is sweet as a bed of violets!"—thus the senses of taste and of smell would severally gain delectation! We beg to present these critical morsels to Earl Granville, as materials in store for his accustomed comic speeches at the Academy dinners!

The Royal Academy, incident to the downfall in art standards, has increased its exhibition space. It is acting the part of certain politicians who lower the franchise, let in the flood of democracy, and with the consequent multiplication of constituents, open additional voting-booths. This year no less than 9010 works sought admission. And three new rooms were added, making sixteen in all, and affording accommodation as follows: Oil-pictures, 1160—eleven rooms; water-colours and miniatures, 419—one room; black and white, including etchings, drawings, and engravings, 160—one room; architectural drawings, 227—one room; sculpture, 168—two rooms;—making the amazing total of 2134 works. This, the largest

number yet admitted, is 278 in excess of the total of last year; and the list of exhibitors is swollen by 140 names. Yet, notwithstanding these generous efforts, no less than 6876 proffered works were either rejected or crowded out!

If the display made in the large gallery may be taken as a gauge of the whole Academy, poor, indeed, is the muster. Seldom have we encountered severer disappointment. The general effect is the reverse of decorative: prevailing dulness and blackness are relieved chiefly by patches of crude colour. The room, though architecturally imposing, is said to be difficult to hang; and the task this year was not the easier when the vested rights of certain Academicians who shall be nameless, gave possession of the line to at least seven works which otherwise would on their demerits have been turned out altogether. And little relief comes from the ponderous presence of forty-two portraits! The subject-pictures, viewed from the centre of the room, give to the walls somewhat the appearance of symmetric Florentine mosaics—a triumph, surely, for the hangers rather than for the artists! A greater contrast can hardly be conceived than that between this rapidness and the pungency of the chief hall in the Paris Salon. One cause of weakness is the want of scale. Hardly a figure is above a third the size of life, except the full-length portraits, which from above dwarf the small fancy articles near at hand. But the want of scale is not more fatal than the lack of style. As to the grand style about which Reynolds raved, not a muscle, bone, or rag of it is visible anywhere. And when history unfortunately is conspicuous—as in Mr Frith's "John Knox at Holyrood"—so far is the manner from

historic, that we could wish the artist had never diverted his talents from the railway station or Epsom race-course. On all sides it is but too evident that the mode of study and the system of painting are widely severed from the practice of the great schools. These modern pictures, as may be well supposed, have little or naught in common with galleries of the old masters. The subjects have no elevation, the forms lack nobility of type, the drawing is without grandeur of line, and the treatment is little else than pretty or picturesque. The best intentions are usually carried out the feeblest—as in Mr Herbert's "Sheepfold"; and by way of ill recompense the commonest objects generally come out the strongest—as, for instance, Sir Thomas Boughey's black boots, emphasised with a vengeance by Mr Collier! It will readily be inferred that the collective contents are not merely varied, as the most tolerant of Presidents would have us believe, but absolutely chaotic and purposeless. Thus is felt the force of Rossetti's sarcasm—that to talk of the English school is ridiculous, because it does not exist.

Three master-works, to be held in remembrance, occupy to advantage the chief centres of the large gallery. "A Reading from Homer" shows Mr Alma Tadema at his best, and that signifies superlative merit. The reader, seated on a white marble terrace, with an outlook over the blue Mediterranean, has the poetic furor of a rhapsodist; also abandoned to the muses is a lady, evidently a study from the painter's wife, reclining 'mid rich drapery, likewise a minstrel seated, the lyre at his side, and a youth, finely fashioned, clad in dark fur-skin, and stretched full length on the white marble floor.

Like thrilling recitations we remember to have witnessed on the bay of Naples. Mr Tadema has surpassed himself in the technical perfection of his handiwork; yet the superlative praise lavished on his illusive marble is excessive, seeing that house decorators send out skilled mechanics who imitate to illusion marbles and woods at so much per square foot. We esteem more highly the advance apparent in the living tenants of the scene: occasionally the painter has "imitated humanity so abominably" that we might suppose "some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well!" But now all is changed, and matchless realism pictures a scene in which imagination delights.

Vis-à-vis to Mr Tadema's triumph hangs Mr Millais's failure—"The Ruling Passion." The technical perfections of the one make all the more obvious the shortcomings of the other. Yet the subject is felicitous: Mr Barlow, the engraver, a magnificent study, reclines on a couch, the very image of doting science fallen sick. Around inquisitively gather children intently gazing on a bird of bright plumage, which the old ornithologist, himself wise as an owl, holds up in his hand. A dull dismal sort of blanket stretches across the couch, and a serious mistake is that the colour throughout has not been pitched up to the bright bird, but painted down to this dull blanket—which verily as a wet blanket, to use a vulgar phrase, weighs heavily on the picture, and quenches the colour which here and there vainly strives to kindle into fire. And the handling falters equally with the colour, as if the artist tried, hesitated, and at last ended without getting what he wanted. Composition pictures are

known to cost Mr Millais trouble and perplexity : he does not, as did the old masters, settle his scheme beforehand by preliminary drawings, he prefers with bold brush to extemporise on canvas direct; what proves wrong he paints out and begins afresh : thus, hit or miss, he knocks his picture about until it comes right. Reynolds, who is known to have paid dearly for this hazardous practice, when complimented on the completion of a work, replied, "Under it lie many pictures, some better and some worse!" Mr Millais, did he care to reveal the secrets of his studio, might have to make like confessions. Yet his changing methods may be accounted but as the ready and varying resources of genius.

The third picture favoured with a post of honour, Mr Orchardson's "*Salon of Madame Récamier*" has during the season received tribute from encircling crowds. We confess ourselves among the minority, content to stand a little outside the worshipping throng. Curiosity, however, to read the names printed on the frame, by way of index to the celebrities within, may have something to do with the eager approaches. Wishing to begin with the chief characteristic, we sought for a key to the carpet—a fabric and design so magnificent as to claim possession of the greater part of the floor-space all to itself. This remarkable carpet is the clue to the artist's invariable scheme of composition : it is as a spacious arena empty and to let. And the narrowness of the remaining standing-ground drives to the wall the distinguished assembly, with Talleyrand in the midst, and Canova and Madame de Staël at either extremity. Mr Orchardson, as a painter of history, has often found repose and unobtrusive dignity in a vacuum, so he instinctively se-

cludes Madame Récamier in the solitude and the silence of a distant sofa. This happy isolation may be supposed to respond to "the repose of her manner," which, it is said, "made her sympathy more effective." However, "the old aristocracy" do not dare to approach, but simply take a distant look at the fair phenomenon draped in white and freely distended to view. The delineation of historic characters depends a good deal on traits familiar to the comic stage—such as a shrug of the shoulders, a twist of the neck, a lurch in the spine, or a sprawl of the legs. The execution is scratchy, and the colour comes from the mustard-pot, with an added mixture of chalk and water. All this may be supremely clever, yet perhaps just a little short of the French ideal of an intellectual and fashionable *salon*.

We have tried, but in vain, to reckon up twenty works that will live. Among outsiders, Mr J. W. Waterhouse is the man who has again made a decided hit. "*St Eulalia*" ranks first-class, whether judged as a dramatic poem or as a picture. The saint lies outstretched and half clad in the Roman Forum, and the miraculous fall of snow which came after her martyrdom to shroud the loveliness of her form, already whitens the ground. Roman guards ward off the passionate approach of Christians pressing forward to the martyr, and among a flock of gentle doves, one on the wing is supposed to bear the spirit of the saint heavenwards. The whole conception rises out of the common, and the treatment is eminently artistic. If we mistake not, Mr Waterhouse has won his election into the Academy. Since these words were written, the prophecy is fulfilled. Mr Frank Dicksee, if he have not quite

realised his promise, remains true to his poetic gift, in the Spenserian interpretation of "Chivalry." A fair lady stands bound to a tree, and a brave knight avenges the insult, and comes to her deliverance. The composition, it may be objected, has been huddled together in a confused heap, and is as destitute of aerial perspective as a piece of tapestry. But much may be forgiven for the sake of the deep-toned harmonies, and the ardent spirit of love and devotion which breathes as in poet's vision. Also, among efforts of the imagination must not be overlooked Sir Frederick Leighton's decorative frieze dedicated to "Music." Here space is apportioned rhythmically, but the figures are posed with a sense of harmonies over-sweet, and notes too long drawn out. Also, it may be objected that in certain sleepy or swooning passages the dying cadences are overdone. Altogether, the tune to which the composition is set, has a sentimentality of which Dryden was innocent in his *Ode to St Cecilia*.

As the last relic of the past, we take a lingering look at monumental art, a scene "After the Arena," wherein Mr Armitage, of the school of Delaroche, depicts on large scale and in a broad manner the entombment in the catacombs of a young Christian, killed in the Roman amphitheatre. The artist shows a proud indifference to popularity; he does not condescend to win by grace or charm by colour, and yet his art commands respect. This solemn scene was designed as a contribution to the projected and long-neglected decoration of St Paul's; but the artist withdrew his offer, because the picture turned out so dark that, if placed in the Cathedral, it could only be seen as an obscure hole in the wall! Alas for St Paul's and the lost art of

mural decoration! Among the melancholy signs of decline, none are more ominous than the neglect, not to say the derision, which has befallen time-honoured monumental art. Were it not for the successful labours of Sir Frederick Leighton within the South Kensington Museum, the art might indeed be dead. Surely our national school, if we have one, has not gained in nobility since the exhibition in 1843, within Westminster Hall, of cartoons for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. The Royal Commission of the Fine Arts, headed by the Prince Consort, and numbering illustrious legislators, men of science and of letters, stirred up England to a revival, now remembered only as a distant and dim tradition. In the consequent competition, prizes fell to the lot of two young and comparatively unknown men, Mr Edward Armitage and Mr G. F. Watts. And amid faint-heartedness and falling away on all sides, it is reassuring to find that the first faith and early love of these two veterans on entering professional life, remain firm and true to the last. Mr Watts's contribution to the Grosvenor, "Love and Life," and Mr Armitage's "After the Arena" in the Academy, are compositions built upon the truths which govern the great schools in all times and places. But such noble and self-sacrificing efforts are all but thrown away; the world no longer wants this art. We have heard Mr Watts declare his willingness to undertake national works, his readiness to clothe with colour the railway terminus in Euston Square, for little more than the bare cost of the materials. But the time is past; we have fallen upon days which were foretold when England's art turned from grandeur

to littleness, from noble conception to servile imitation. A Royal Academician with brush in hand, working on a historic picture for the Houses of Parliament, said in our hearing, "This art is doomed to death; the young painters of the rising generation, wandering in other paths, have not the power or desire to keep it alive." The fulfilment of the prophecy has brought disaster on the exhibitions of the present year.

And the observation is melancholy, as it is true, that the trite and trivial compositions within the Academy are almost invariably the best in point of art; and that when a picture is heralded by a ponderous quotation in the catalogue, bespeaking the serious attention of the reader—or when, as in Mr Frith's "John Knox," Mr Herbert's "Message of a Flower," or Mr Storey's "beautiful five maidens sitting to Zeuxis," the pages of history or of poetry are hung up for public view,—certain are we to find some abortion which pleads excuse by good intentions. But that such miscarriages rank as the rightful ordinances of nature or of art, the great historic periods disprove. The best art has never been superficial or frivolous; on the contrary, it is serious and profound, weighted with thought, and severe through study. The sublimest truths in religion, the gravest thoughts in philosophy, inspired Michael Angelo and Raphael while painting in the Vatican. And rising to the great argument, their art became grand as the thought. All vital art is conceived within the brain; and the brain-force as volition makes itself felt to the finger-ends, and so passes into the pencil or brush. Art is brain-power in visible forms, and that is the power which ebbs and stagnates in modern art.

And as a substitute for the creative power, the imaginative force, of the old painters and sculptors, our contemporaries offer compilations, eclecticism, imitations. A creation of art has been aptly compared to the union between body and soul, making the whole humanity; and the divorce of this divine union has brought upon our modern art poverty and impotence. A morning's walk through our exhibitions is a perplexity and distress. We might at moments mistake a gallery for a street of tombs; in fancy we stumble across bodies that have lost their souls; or, perchance, encounter shadows, disembodied ghosts "doomed for a certain term to walk the night." And this dismay and confusion come of the suicidal conflict between schools natural and schools spiritual; and until some middle mean be struck, and the truth recognised and practically carried out, that the outward form is modelled on the indwelling life, that mind modulates minutest surfaces, that motive and will are present in every movement—it were vain to hope for the revival so long waited for: that union between the real and the ideal, found in varying phases and forms in classic Greece and in medieval Italy.

Imagination, pre-eminently the art faculty, the mind's creative power, is, as already said, strangely absent from the Academy. We have walked through and through all the eleven rooms with the express purpose of counting up the pictures of imaginative flight, and the very few that meet the eye point to the conclusion that when an artist shoots high he is sure to miss his mark. Take as a dire example, "Night covering the sleeping Earth," a vision revealed to Mr Henry J. Stocks. Close

by hangs the ghost of a "Cloud," which Mr George M'Culloch would have us accept as an adequate rendering of Shelley's gossamer fancy. The painter fails in part because the poet's "cloud" is formless as star-dust, and floats in ethereal space beyond the sphere and the reach of pictorial art. These misfortunes prove how hard and hazardous it is to follow in the footsteps of the poet-painter, Blake. Theologians tell us that the age of miracles is past; and surely our artists have no such gift, for when they essay the supernatural, they miss divine grace, and do but violate nature.

This sense of the supernatural has forsaken modern artists. Mr Goodall shows reverence and refinement, yet the Holy Mother and Child are hardly divine. The face of the Madonna is a form which the painter dwells on fondly and oft repeats. The type has been studiously chastened; material blemishes which spoil beauty, the blots of sin which mar humanity, are carefully exorcised. The head is hardly traditional, and has none of the severity of pre-Raphaelite painters; it inclines rather to the suavity of later masters, such as Sassoferrato. And Mr Goodall has not failed, for want of pains, in a small picture, bearing from Archdeacon Farrar's 'Life of Christ,' the explanatory words: "The Spirit of God descended like a dove and rested from infancy on the Holy Child." The artist is famed for tender modelling and loving touch when depicting infancy, yet here he lacks at least religious feeling. He throws a naked and simply naturalistic baby on its back, and above is thrust a white bird. This we are asked to accept for sacred art: but after every possible care to compass all perfection, the one element of

the divine, is left out. The result is unsatisfactory, from lack of the supernatural, which shines in and shadows the face of the divine Child in the San Sisto Madonna. The problem of how to depict the divine in the human is perplexing, yet possibly some light may dawn on our darkness through Wordsworth's ode: "The intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood." Artists of the olden time might seem to paint as the poet sings of "the heaven that lies about us in our infancy," of "the soul that rises with us, our life's star," of "the trailing clouds of glory wherewith we come from God our home." Mr Goodall's exclusively naturalistic transcript of babyhood bears out the text that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Nature-study must have less material aims; and if the art of England have a future, it will be in taking new departures and making fresh approaches—in watching and waiting upon nature, listening to her voices, learning her secrets, and conforming to the order of her ways. The naturalism in which our age is strong may only need to be directed aright; if we can but recognise that the highest aspects and laws of nature—the thoughts that underlie creation—are divine and godlike, then religious art, though not precisely in the old forms, may once more shine on the world.

Fancy, usually accounted a lesser faculty than imagination, ought yet to show its sport and spell within our exhibitions. An artist with pleasing, playful fantasy, comes as sunlight sparkling among flowers. Fuller saith that such is the "marvellous and enviable fecundity of fancy, that it adorns whatever it touches, and can invest naked fact and dry reasoning with unlooked-

for beauty." Here, then, is one of the appointed means whereby the dull monotony and the corroding care of daily life may obtain refreshment and relief. Yet this ready remedy for the mind's maladies our artists, by some strange perversity, scorn to administer. However, Mr Calderon prescribes a mixture sufficiently drastic alongside "The River," to be repeated if required in the "Morning." Such personifications, poor of their kind, pander to vitiated tastes, and the demi-toilet constitutes an offence compared to which simple nudity is innocence itself. The receipt for these appetising cordials is: take a buxom blooming lass, loosen and lower her dress, bare her arms, show freely her ankles, make her at all points a pert piece of impertinence, and then christen the choice creation a muse or a goddess! If an artist cannot refine, it were better for the public morals that he should throw down the brush.

"Nude studies," this year conspicuous beyond wont, have provoked in the papers an exciting controversy. A certain "British Matron," with zeal beyond knowledge, stirred up a storm in her teacup! And "Another British Matron," "after some years absence in the colonies," deemed herself qualified on her return to lecture the Old World on pictorial proprieties! What specially struck persons of real experience in art was the lack both of knowledge and of novelty displayed in the letters. Everything had been said before, and occasionally in better form. Some people may remember the noise raised at the opening of the Crystal Palace against the alarming multitude of nude plaster casts; but at last the wrath of even bishops was appeased at the cost of a few hundred fig-leaves! Yet the charge of indecency, if it can be

sustained, is far too serious to be treated with levity. Not only the morals of the general public, but the best interests of art and of artists, are at stake. Our experience both at home and abroad is, that no sooner does an ill-advised artist pander to passion, than he and his art alike hurry to destruction. Art has for its mission to refine and ennoble, and we can positively state that artists guard with utmost vigilance against the approach of vulgarity and vice.

The number of nude studies is inconsiderable; among the total of 2000 pictorial works collected in the Grosvenor Gallery and the Academy, we count but seven, as follows: "Love and Life," by Mr Watts; "Eve's Second Paradise," by Mr Phil Morris—both in the Grosvenor. The remaining five in the Academy are: "Ariadne deserted of Theseus," by Mrs Rae; "Eve," by Mrs Merritt; "Andromeda," by Mr Calderon; "Circe," by Mr Collier; and "Diadumenè," by Mr Poynter. These figures give to the student mind little occasion for cavil. Measured by Continental standards, they are singular for repose, reticence, and decorum; and, tested by general or abstract rules, they appear sufficiently innocent of evil suggestion. And if appeal be made to the universal practice of all schools, from Phidias to Titian and Correggio, possibly will be recognised an avoidance of what might shock, coupled with an endeavour to conform to the chastened views of the times in which we live. Artists themselves indignantly repel the charge of indelicacy; and they will thank Mr Poynter for the proud disdain wherewith he concludes his explanatory letter to the "Times": "Against the accusation of indecency I will not attempt to defend myself; there is no common ground

on which I can meet your correspondents on this score."

The justification, or otherwise, of the undraped figure, is determined in any given case greatly, indeed mainly, by the motive; also by the treatment, and by delicacies and degrees subtle as the finest line or the shadow of a shade. And on a question thus mixed and complex, not the prejudices of casual correspondents, but the opinion of experts, connoisseurs, and men of culture have weight. Charles Kingsley is to be thanked for the timely platitudes, that "to the pure all things are pure," and "that the foundation of all art, as well as of all modesty and of all love, is to be found in the great saying which tells us how the man and his wife were both naked and not ashamed." And Mr Ruskin, as might be hoped, rises altogether above the common confusion of morals with clothes, when he defines immoral art as the delight in the prolonged contemplation of a vile thing; and moral art, exemplified by a picture of Titian, a Greek statue, a Greek coin, or a Turner landscape, as "the delight in the perpetual contemplation of a good and perfect thing." The opinion of Sir Frederick Leighton, expressed equally in words and works, is well known. In the studio we have heard him rebut the idea that moral objections attach to the undraped figure. Had time permitted he might have added, all depends on the treatment. We also recall a conversation on this question years ago in Florence with Hiram Powers, whose nudity of the Greek Slave always escaped the purist's gibe. Indeed we once heard a lady declare that there was nothing in the world she would not do to rescue a creature so lovely and spotless. The sculptor, Mr Powers, in talking

over the figure, dwelt on the exceptional liberty which the public concedes to the artist; and with emphasis added, all the more it becomes our duty not to abuse the privilege. We have always found this feeling of responsibility among artists, and with none less than with that earnest and single-minded man, John Gibson, in Rome. The whole aim of his art, like that of the Greeks, was to perfect the human form; and when, on one occasion, a lady advanced the charge of indelicacy, he is reported to have replied, "I should have no opinion of the modesty of a woman who could not look on the noblest work of creation without a blush." Mr Eyre Crowe does good service when he adds to the weight of these testimonies the opinion of the greatest lady in the land. It is recorded in 'Fifty Years of Public Work, by Sir Henry Cole,' how, in an exhibition at Gore House in 1853, studies of the nude by Mulready were arranged in a separate room by themselves. The royal party were expected, and the authorities, fearing their censure, closed the door. But the Queen, wandering away with Sir Henry Cole, and coming to the Mulready room, "opened the door and entered. She exclaimed, What fine works! and told me to fetch the Prince and Princess to see them. She gave these drawings a long examination, making frequent exclamations of admiration. And she commissioned Sir Charles Eastlake to find out if Mulready would part with any."

A knowledge of wellnigh every picture-gallery and museum in Europe enables us to state from observation the effect of nude studies on the public mind. Much depends on custom; and in southern climes, where in life the figure

is comparatively unburdened and free, the undraped form on canvas or in marble comes with less surprise. But, speaking generally, all depends on culture or its contrary. The ignorant—those, for example, who howl against Mr Poynter's "*Diadumenè*"—see but naked nature. The educated overlook the nudity in the art. And we have always found some student minds, of both sexes, wishful to extend their knowledge and to refine their taste. Such persons regard the *Venus of Milo*, or the *Venus of the Capitol*, somewhat as a revelation; they are moved as by music or rhythmical thought. Passion cannot intrude. Such is the spell of beauty and perfection as personified by the Greeks, and apostrophised by Winckelmann in a passage we never tire of perusing. "*Beauty*," writes this grave critic under rhapsody, "as the loftiest mark and the central point of art, seemed to beckon me,—probably that same beauty which exhibited herself to the great artists, and allowed herself to be felt, grasped, and figured. I have sought and longed to recognise her in their works. And I humbly cast my eyes down before this creature of the imagination—as did those to whom the Highest appeared—believing that I saw the Highest in this vision of the fancy."

We would not venture to claim, at least for a modern artist, this bright vision of beauty. But even an English Academician hardly deserves contumely when he is only doing his best. Mr Poynter, at any rate, cannot be charged with the vice of originality: "*Diadumenè*," the very front of his offending, is nothing else than a faithful copy of "the *Esquiline Venus*," found in 1870 in Rome, and now in the Museum of the

Capitol. Almost the only piece of invention is the right arm, innocently engaged in dressing the hair; the left arm is also wanting in the marble, but the hand still resting on the head determines the action, which our conscientious Academician has not cared to alter. Slightly, however, he has seen fit to modify the head: archaic curls are relaxed into flowing locks, and severe features relent into society smiles. The vaulted chamber, the mosaics, and other accessories, while singularly felicitous, are but little inventive. These archæological details, it is said, are suggested by a small bath-room in the Vatican, decorated with designs after Raphael. Thus, instead of gratuitous offence against morals, we have studious historic accuracy. Moreover, the original statue, "the *Esquiline Venus*," which Mr Poynter has been guilty of copying, was expressly selected for reproduction in "the collection of casts from the antique in the South Kensington Museum." And this collection, we are told on authority, was made by "the Committee of Council on Education," for the good purpose of "giving the artist the opportunity of studying the best representations of the different periods of Greek art," and for "affording the general public an opportunity of learning the nature of true art, by the contemplation of the works of the highest excellence." Therefore it would seem that Mr Poynter in the Academy has but acted in accord with the educational scheme of the Government at South Kensington.

Mr Poynter's temperate letter to the '*Times*' appeared during the writing of the above. He pleads that his attempt at the restoration of the *Esquiline Venus* is "a perfectly legitimate aim for a painter.

To represent in painting the 'motive' which suggested the statue, with the rich setting of architecture and colour which the sculptor is unable to give, is surely within the province of the artist; and the action of the figure, one of those simple everyday movements which especially lend themselves to artistic treatment, seems quite as suitable for a picture as for a statue." Mr Poynter continues: "I had hoped that by my attempt at realising the sculptor's motive, combining with it such a surrounding as should not only enrich the picture and form a beautiful setting to a beautiful figure, but give some idea of what the bath-room of a lovely Greek or Roman girl might be, I should lift my figure out of the category of the *baigneuses* of the French Salon. Such at least was my intention." Further, it is urged that "an artist, especially if his taste is for classic art, likes once in his life to try his hand at a simple nude figure as the sole subject of his picture." Mr Poynter concludes with the humility becoming the true artist. He was not deterred from the attempt because he knew that he could not be so successful as he might wish. "Who would not paint like Titian if he could? But the names of Titian and Raphael stand alone. It is not because he thinks or even hopes to rival Titian or Raphael that an artist undertakes a subject of this kind, but because he hopes to gain some qualities which may be a little above the common." These unpretending statements induce all the greater respect for the artist and his work.

The fear in some quarters that nudities threaten the Academy as a besetting sin, has slender foundation. Their prominence this year is mainly due to the accident that the hangers happen to have

these proclivities. And purists may take consolation in the inability of our artists, from lack of preliminary training, to indulge in the disgusting displays familiar in the Paris Salon. Yet we can so far rejoice over the recent outcry, that it serves to uphold art morals, which indeed cannot be too strictly guarded. A writer of singular knowledge and discretion, signing himself "H.," has defined the terms upon which the undraped figure is a noble subject of art. These in brief are,—“(1) a manifest appeal to the love of beauty and not to appetite; (2) an ideal presentation, and not a literal transcript of individual fact—a generalisation in the imagination, and not a photographic record of the particular; (3) the observance of certain special artistic conventions as old as *Praxiteles*.” We incline to think that Mr Poynter’s “*Diadumenè*” in good degree complies with these terms. And on these conditions, “H.” pleads that the use of the undraped figure in art has been the permitted practice of the best men and of the purest genius, the allowed custom of the cultivated world for centuries in ancient and in modern times. It might be invidious to name the Royal Academicians capable or otherwise of complying with these conditions!

If national art may be measured by the types of a noble humanity, the English school holds no position at all. The Greeks reached the ideal in Jove, Juno, Apollo, and Venus; the Christians in Christ and the Madonna. In comparison, what can English art show? The material school of Locke, though somewhat superseded, tacitly holds possession of our schools and exhibitions. In vain Kant, Coleridge, and Hamilton have enthroned inward intu-

itions, for our artists ignore all beyond the outward senses. Therefore they cannot rise to a type or an ideal, because typical and ideal art can only be born of reason and imagination. All that has been written on transcendental anatomy, the speculations and guesses at truth of Goethe, doctrines touching transcendental forms missed in the individual but by nature constantly pointed to and struggled after—these, the teachings of science and the visions of poetry, lie wholly outside the ken of our artists and the scheme of our academies. Thus the nineteenth century, brilliant in discovery and unparalleled in progress, fails to leave its mark on our contemporary art.

Mr Long cherishes a cheap ideal, and is blessed with amazing fecundity. Having favoured the Academy with six performances—of which a portrait is by far the best—he finds himself with a surplus sufficient to start a separate exhibition in Bond Street. He grows a little wearisome; yet “The Search for Beauty” and “The Masterpiece of Zeuxis” give opportunity for measuring himself against the Greeks. An apt quotation from Cicero explains how impartial Nature distributes among her children graces marred by blemishes, and how Art, collecting scattered charms, creates the perfect beauty. We are introduced in the one picture to five matchless maidens, and in the other to Zeuxis in the act of taking elegant extracts for the famous figure of Helen. Our English Zeuxis extracts beauty like sweets from flowers, distils sentiments sugary as confections. But by what ill-luck did plain and prosaic Mr Storey make love to “the beautiful five maidens sitting to Zeuxis”? The picture is a parody; and the painter, while wooing the sublime, has been betrayed into the ridiculous

Genre painting—to be defined as an art of a kind not included in any other kind—it might reasonably be supposed would show progress. It is comparatively easy; it calls for no severe apprenticeship; it is of ready appreciation; it has the advantage of a story; it admits of endless variety, and amuses tastes, however miscellaneous. And yet, even in this comparatively humble sphere, again the complaint is heard that the quantity is more astounding than the quality; also, the objection is justly urged that the size of canvases grows out of all proportion to the thought expressed. The number of artists competent to turn out average work, to give grammatical form to elementary exercises, is under constant increase with the multiplication of Government schools. But, unfortunately, much of the art is of a sort which might be anticipated from educated mechanics. Certain utopian philanthropists and politicians of Radical persuasion suffered discouragement when native genius did not crop up in country places as plentiful as blackberries in the hedges. Yet still they are on the look-out for the village Hampden, the mute inglorious Milton, the mighty Michael Angelo; but up to the present moment no one answering to the description has appeared—at least within the Royal Academy. And we confess to some surprise that the art of common things, instead of taking a new start, shares in the general decline. It is not always easy to fix on a precise standard for comparison; but we would suggest a walk from Piccadilly to Trafalgar Square, and if we mistake not, much that is crude, coarse, and incomplete in Burlington House will find monition from the National Gallery. It were superfluous to say that our contempor-

ary art appears vapid and pointless before Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode"; and simply to name Wilkie and "The Blind Fiddler," is to throw living men into the shade. And when shall we again come across the character, the compactness, and the technical skill of Mulready, or the piquant story-telling and the quiet humour of Leslie? The traits and qualities we here prize have fallen out of date. No longer have our artists the same neatness in narrative, brevity in wit, feeling of fitness and proportion, or sense of relation between lucidity of idea and the lighting of the picture, or between states of feeling and the tones of colour. Such are the minor matters which make manners, and stand, as it were, for etiquette in small highly finished pictures of society. Nowadays pictorial gait and deportment have grown more awkward and less easy.

Mr Stacey Marks remains as a relic of the past, and, like the best of his craft, he approaches nature by the beaten paths of the Dutch masters. No one can better bring a picture together. As a humorist he keeps within bounds; his characters are seldom overdrawn. He is happy in his titles, and he sticks closely to his texts. Take the following: "A Good Story," "A Treatise on Parrots," "At the Printseller's." Mr Boughton is to be congratulated on his return to quiet walks among our poets: studies from English literature have sadly fallen out of fashion. "Milton visited by Andrew Marvell," who tells us how he "beheld the poet blind yet bold," has little force or colour; yet character is delineated with care, and the pathos and resignation depicted are in keeping with the well-known sonnet on the poet's blindness—"When I consider how my light is spent ere half my days." Mr Burgess,

in "Spanish Beggars" grouped at a church door, again makes good his claim as our English Murillo. Mr Thomas Faed shows accustomed pathos and domesticity in "The Mother reading while the Children Sleep." Mr Fred Brown, in "Rural England," with pencil, gentle and persuasive as the pen of Goldsmith, might seem to depict "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain." Mr Arthur Hughes, always graceful and refined, is at his best in "Sunday Morning." But Mr Seymour Lucas sinks history into *genre* in a chance episode after "Sedgemoor"; and Mr Yeames is equally unfortunate with "Prisoners of War, 1805"; while Mr Pettie has the infelicity to serve up, without new invention, that stage-worn situation, "Charles Surface selling his Ancestors"! Verily of the making of "pot-boilers" there is no end; and *genre* pictures seem concoctions, which rarely pall the palate or glut the market.

Portrait-painting, to which the British nation has been addicted from early times, assuredly does not share the decline that has befallen certain other branches. Indeed we can hardly recall a year wherein the heads of contemporaries, illustrious or otherwise, have made so strong a demonstration. And though countless likenesses of nobodies degenerate into bores, yet it cannot be denied that the intelligent portrait-painter has been and is of high service to the State. He does more than follow fashion or pander to personal vanity. Holbein, in the reign of Henry VIII., and Van dyck, in the time of Charles I., bequeathed to posterity the living image of men who otherwise had faded into traditions and shadows. And the painters on whom this office at present devolves, if not equally worthy, serve as more or

less faithful chroniclers of faces and figures which may fill the pages of history. And it may be observed how the changing styles of portraiture conform to the spirit of successive ages. The school of Vandyck was less for robust action than for elegant attitude: the lassitude of pendant hands, the meditative melancholy of the heads, fitted the fortunes of a falling dynasty. Now all is changed: a race of limners has risen, represented by Holl, Oules, and Herkomer, superior to refined debility and subtle sensitiveness, somewhat in the same way as a true British stone-mason is nobler than an emasculate carver in marble. We glory in a period of material power and prosperity, and our portrait-painters are not behind their day and generation. They load canvases with massive material as an engineer raises earthwork; and under their sympathetic pencil merchant princes smile smugly over a commerce on which the sun never sets! The manner may not be supremely senatorial, yet it tones well with the democratic complexion of the average citizen! Of such speaking likenesses several, both in the Academy and the Grosvenor, assail the eye. Perhaps the clerical mind, intolerant of familiarity, may impose more decorous approach; and Mr Oules does not fail to rise to his sitter in the shrewd scholastic head of the Bishop of Worcester: Mr Holl, too, makes a mental effort to compass the weighty brain of the Bishop of Peterborough. Mr Herkomer, with less need of the light of the intellect, surveys and maps out the common-sense features of the late Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, honoured as King of the Principality! Few and far between are the physiognomies which look from their frames

as celebrities designed by nature. Mr Wilson Barrett, as Hamlet, comes from the studio of Mr Holl, little else than showy—much, in fact, as he appears on the stage. The same painter has a better chance with the Earl of Dufferin: the manner has quiet reticence; resources seem held in reserve; the canvas glows from within outwards, as if beneath were slumbering fires; the brush of one of the great colourists might have intoned the deep harmonies. These express art qualities rise supreme in Mr Pettie's "Bret Harte"—a profile of fine literary type, keen to observe and facile to portray: to meet this picture is like an introduction under favouring circumstances to the man himself.

The styles now in vogue favour men more than women. Yet females now pressing to the front, ambitious of the rights of men, masculine, strong-minded, and mostly of a certain age, are objects not unsuited to an art of knock-down naturalism! But, sadly enough, the Royal Academy shows persistent preference for youthful charms, decked by fashion and given to frivolity. Yet no serious offence can be taken at the millinery which Mr Hicks hangs on Mrs Talbot Crosby. More obnoxious by far is Mr J. S. Sargent in *Lady Playfair*—an art evidently Parisian, sensational, with tricky impertinences, compared to which Cockney conceits are spotless. Unrest possesses the figure, as in certain French schools boasting illegitimate descent from Michael Angelo; from elbow to finger-end is felt so feline a fling, that the hand had been more fitly engaged with a dagger than with flowers. Handsome Mrs Harry Rous is on view from the showy studio of Mr Calderon; for quietude is to be preferred a lady, full

length, in dark walking-dress, by Mr Farquharson. Hung as a companion, pleasantly appears Mrs Sandbach Parker, with all the winning blandishments of Mr Sant's popularity-seeking pencil. The figure, flowing in graceful lines of drapery, is poised as between movement and rest; it does not walk, it glides. Perhaps the most difficult problem is that solved by Mr Herkomer in the head and half figure of Miss Catherine Grant. The scheme is less familiar in England than on the Continent; the key struck is high; the face and light drapery relieve boldly from a light background, gaining utmost luminosity. Reynolds, extolling Rubens, speaks of the value given to warm flesh tints by the proximity of cool white drapery: an inferior artist, it is added, would have forced up the light flesh by dark accessories. Mr Herkomer, if hardly a Rubens, is here not his inferior in delicate studies of greys. The picture is kept quiet in subdued half-tones, in order to gain detonating force to the crowning climax of black hair, with dark eyes below, which fire sharpest shots at the admiring spectator! The canvas is in striking contrast with its competitors. The practice is and has been to relieve the head in light from a dark background. Yet the old masters, at least the pre-Raphaelites, loved to place their sitters in the open air, against the luminous sky, or in the joyous sunlight. And instead of a blank, impenetrable background, the eye was often pleasantly led, in delightful perspective, among trees, streams, and hills, dotted with dwellings and church towers. Portraiture in those days was a delectation; and fancy, invited to pleasant places, learned of a light and a joy in life now darkened in shadowed cities. What a happy change would come over our Acad-

emy could our portrait-painters banish their dull backgrounds! Yet till faces are more joyous and complexions clearer, possibly blackness is the safest foil.

But dulness and darkness find cheerful relief in the presence of childhood. Children and women, socially and politically classed together, have certainly in art close affinities. And it commonly occurs that painters who are happy with mothers and daughters succeed best with the rising generation in the nursery. Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr Sant, also Mr Millais, notwithstanding the vigour of his male portraits, give proof of this law of natural selection. And the converse reasoning may hold equally good—for it would appear that such stern dogmatists as Holl, Oulless, and Herkomer have not enticed to their studios the innocence and simplicity of childhood. However, seldom has been seen a prettier show on the Academy walls; and the hangers have done well to direct loving eyes to three choice gems, hung in sequence as if to provoke comparison. Let us begin with "The Lady Peggy Primrose." The very name suggests fields and hedgerows. And Mr Millais, with free play of brush verging on affected carelessness, depicts the unspoilt child of nature—the companion of flowers, bright as the dew of the morning, fresh as the breezes. As a shifting scene follows the sister, dainty little Lady Sibyl Primrose, decked out by the tasteful President for society. If Mr Millais's darling be a wild flower of the fields, Sir Frederick's pet is the more artificial plant of the hothouse. The face is sickly, the dress is smart, the colour pretty,—and it may be observed that the child carries a pendant hand, and poses with conscious satisfaction—traits possibly slightly premature in one so young.

All is got up at the cost of infinite pains. Thirdly, Mr Sant introduces, as no unworthy companion, "Daisy," the daughter of G. T. R. Preston, Esq. Here is encountered another art. We enter the studio of Reynolds, whose children are blissful as cherubs, mischievous as elves, wise as owls! Mr Sant's "Daisy" grew in "sun and shower," "and beauty born of murmuring sound doth pass into her face." Other artists are less felicitous: Mr Phil Morris affects a false sentiment; Mr Storey inflicts a premature age. However, medieval babies and other abortive births rejoice in happy minorities! As an ethnological curiosity is "My Youngest Daughter," by Mr Alma Tadema. This phenomenal portrait acquired special value, if rescued, as might seem, from the fire at the Japanese Village!

The boast we have long heard that our age is pre-eminent in landscape. Why, then, does the Academy show the art in decline? One reason may be that scant justice is done to a class of works which confessedly have no great power to attract the crowd. Another cause is that landscapes suffer under the growing force of realism in figure-subjects. Yet further reason, if not of decadence, of neglect, may be that the average Englishman likes lively incidents and pretty stories, and feels a cloudy hill or a stagnant pond to be just a little dull. Besides, the pressure of business, the hurry of life, the spicy stimulants supplied by public entertainments, quench the love of modest nature and her tranquil ways. Hence scenes such as Mr Alfred Hunt's "Bright October"—a study sensitive and subtle, a sylvan retreat from the noisy haunts of men—is overlooked, save by sympathetic minds. And yet another reason for decline may be, that no sooner is a landscape-painter

safely elected within the Academy, than he begins to decline himself. Hence it happens that the best talent lies outside, and yet the condition of outsiders has long been forlorn.

Some samples may serve to show the merit in the Academy ranks. Mr Peter Graham has once more made a measured shot at the sublime, using Shakespeare for poetic target. "Yet ribbed and paled in with rocks unscalable and roaring waters," offers, in place of outdoor work direct from nature, the artifice of the studio. Within eye-shot hangs Mr Vicat Cole's "Hill and Lock, Dorchester"—a tranquil, lovely scene; yet we venture on the paradox, that the painter might have succeeded better had he taken less pains; he is overlaboured, the life and spontaneity of nature are lost. For another miss of the mark we have to thank a lately elected associate, Mr Oakes. "Cwm Eigian Moor" has less of creation than chaos; the order of nature is upturned and confounded. As welcome reminiscences of a time-honoured art may be greeted contributions from the two sons of John Linnell. "The Wood of Comus" remains among the last lingering samples of poetic landscape. Also Mr Leader perpetuates the past: "The Old Holyhead Road" is nature dramatised; wild torrents and stormy elements, stern and cold, compose heroically. The artist is exceptional in steadily holding the even tenor of his colourless way.

It is but too evident what a radical change has come over art generally. Landscape - painting sprang historically from figure-painting, and has shared its fortunes. And just as painters of the figure lower the summits of society down to democratic levels, so do landscape-artists raze from their compositions mountain

heights and emphasise a low horizon. Fashion affects a pride in common things, luxury simulates a liking for hard living, and a bed of roses has less attraction than a bank of thorns! And even so in landscape the right sort of thing is nature at her commonest, not dressy or decorative, but in negligent *deshabille*, — some bleak dreary desolation, as depicted by Mr Macwhirter, or a bare heath or a dank ditch with a donkey. Nature under utilitarian uses puts on agricultural or bucolic garb, and forms and aspects the most prosaic take the place of Turner's "Vale of Tempe" or "Bay of Baiæ." Trite and elementary schemes of composition, broad and common effects, dependent on readiest contrasts, are accepted in lieu of the cunningly contrived compositions, the intricate harmonies, the difficult problems of light and colour, the aerial perspective compassing infinite space, rejoicing in the art of Turner. It is something incredible that all the teachings of the greatest painter of our century are in the lapse of a single generation ignored and cancelled. And recalling within living memory such compositions as "Byron's Dream," "The Goths in the Garden of Italy," "The Opening of the Sixth Seal," we mourn to think how the bright realm of the imagination is blotted out. Mythological landscape, such as Turner's "Garden of the Hesperides," is obsolete. Historic landscape has died out, and now, we repeat, painters are concerned to realise only the immediate impressions of sense. The immortal verse of our English poets sprang from faculties and functions of the mind which in our living painters lie dormant.

Marine pieces surpass landscapes: even in picture-galleries, England still holds the empire of the

seas. Yet Stanfield had privileges now denied. "The Victory," with the body of Nelson on board after the battle of Trafalgar, is a class of fighting-ships superseded by unpaintable monsters, armour-clad and turret-mounted. Our age is avowedly unpicturesque; and just as our artists on land abandon Manchester factories and magazines in favour of small and humble cottages, so do our marine painters eschew armed castles or store-houses, floating on the sea, and betake themselves to fishing-craft hugging the coast or lying upon the beach. Nothing can be more tempting to the brush than these bold petrels of the storm beating up against the breeze or flying before the gale, with the attendant battle of elements and the bravery of seafaring life. Mr Henry Moore, who this year appears in fine quality, flings himself fearlessly on a sea of troubles; his "Newhaven Packet, mid-Channel" encounters a stiff breeze, with fierce waves which welter under angry storm-clouds. As we write, the news arrives that Mr Moore, as was anticipated, reaps his reward by election into the Academy. Mr Brett, embarking on "The Norman Archipelago," risks, speaking figuratively, shipwreck. The jagged cast-iron rocks studding the shining summer sea are perilous to painter as to navigator; the dazzling lights and contrasted colours assault the eye as startling crudities. The artist is committed to realism and science; but scientific facts seldom lie in the way of beauty. The happy mean is struck by Mr Hook, who, when geologically wrong, is always artistically right. Take, for instance, the sea and shore, cormorants reposing: the near rocks are little more than rude indications, yet, pictorially speaking, they are relatively true; by weight and mass they throw off

the distance, fling into aerial perspective the far-away sea and sky above, and by their sombre shade and colour cast into sparkling lucency the sportive waves breaking into spray. Somehow the artist so breaks and blends his colours, and subdues his tones, as to suggest the work of the old masters: thus, while modern pictures are thin, lie on the surface, and look span-new, Mr Hook gains depths, time-worn textures, the sombre aspects of a world grown old and decayed, yet ever renovating its first youth. Mr T. O. Newton once remarked that the paintings of the ancient Greeks, were they discovered, would probably be found to resemble the pictures of Mr Hook. Such art pertains to all time, because it conforms to essential and unchanging laws. Mr Colin Hunter has a like large and generic manner. His diagram of the "Rapids of Niagara" may be crude and scattered; but in smaller compositions he happily approaches Mr Hook in glow of colour and depth of tone. Landscape gains in poetry and expression when gross materials and hard anatomies melt and mellow under the emotions awakened by Nature herself.

Increasing favour is shown to a class of subjects wherein landscape is animated by living occupants and incidents. Even Mr Keeley Halswelle courts popularity by gathering together sheep under the "Welcome Shade." And others, including Mr Tom Lloyd, have learnt that fatted calves and pretty milkmaids seldom fail to please. Mr Briton Riviere, if occasionally melodramatic, just escapes the namby-pamby in "The Sheep-Stealers": man and dog in silvery moonlight watch the moment for plunder. The artist, as usual, proves his knowledge of lines and his sense of dramatic situation. Mr

Herkomer this year recovers lost ground: his landscapes in the Grosvenor and the Academy are powerful and impressive; and in "Hard Times, 1885," he recalls the pathos peculiar to Fred Walker. The sad scene is laid in a country lane, bleak and bare in wintry cold, with nothing but a scant hedge to shelter an honest labourer with his wife and child, homeless and starving. The picture echoes the cry of humanity in these bad times. In the same room, in a brighter key, Mr S. A. Forbes, an artist who appears under exceptional promise, has grouped with brilliant felicity on a beach, watermen and fish-women engaged in gathering the harvest of the sea. The idea and treatment, obviously borrowed from the Continental schools, tell how the idiosyncrasies of England may profit by merging insular isolation in a large and varied cosmopolitan art.

The clever coterie of painters who clan together to do the romantic in Venice play the harlequin. The first and the best of the brotherhood, Van Haanen, is absent; and his shadow, Mr Henry Woods, in "Cupid's Spell," composes with the trick of a conjurer. Nothing could be more artificial or clap-trap. Mr Logsdaile, who made two seasons ago a palpable hit in the piazza of St Mark, this year is little more than architectural in the brilliant façade of Ca' d'Oro. Of the fidelity of the study we can speak, as we happened to see the artist at work on the spot; or rather, we should say, we watched him waiting, not working, for he refused to add another touch till the sun came out. And it may be that this blinding brilliancy of sunlight betrayed Mr Fildes into meretriciousness, when he emptied his colour-box on "Venetians" washing clothes by a canal! Certainly he did not

take counsel of Titian as he heaped on his canvas crudity and opacity after this fashion. Neither was Carpaccio at his elbow, when, for sake of show and flaunting finery, he sacrificed sobriety and the last semblance of simplicity. The rawness of the pigments, the most virulent that chemists can possibly compound, inflicts an intolerable torture on the eye. And that such a work, at once clever and wilfully wrong, should come from Venice, the cradle of all that is lovely in colour, the city of Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret, speaks of the wide gulf which lies between the old and the new, and tells how celestial harmonies may change, "as sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh!"

The Grosvenor Gallery has done good service, and yet seems to have missed its mark. What, indeed, at the present moment may be its precise *raison d'être*, is not quite clear. As a protest against the sins and shortcomings of the Academy, it no longer possesses a power to be taken into account. The Academy has still the pick of the studios, and its rival takes the waifs and strays that remain over. And these eccentricities and vagaries of genius, when not edifying are entertaining,—as when some unfledged poet-painter, who fain would fly and fears no fall, accosts the Tragic Muse and meets Comedy unawares. Here the visitor may come across a medieval acrobat in some miracle-play, a marvel of anatomy and expression beyond the reach of nature. And it must be conceded that these varied performances in Bond Street consort well with the chaos of English art.

But the Grosvenor Gallery could never have won its position solely by mediocrity and eccentricity. Its exhibitions have attracted, through the presence of distinguished artists

seldom to be seen elsewhere. Thus, here we profit by Mr Richmond's expositions of the classic; and are disappointed when, as at present, we look in vain for some resurrection of medieval art from Mr Burne Jones. The latter has sometimes drifted dubiously without compass and historic chart; but last year, throwing off the fetters of archaicism, in "King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" he gave to our English school one of its noblest products. And it is a happy augury that the Royal Academy has just added to its prosaic ranks this poetic painter. The Grosvenor, the stronghold of medievalism, cherishes memories of the poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and, as might be expected, the mannerisms of the master are conspicuous among his followers. But imagination and colour, with strivings for generic types and an ideal beauty, are seldom absent; hence more than curiosity attaches to the somewhat abnormal creations of Mr Walter Crane, Mr Stanhope, Mr Strudwick, Mrs and Miss Stillman, and Miss Pickering.

Yet the fortunes of this modern medievalism suffer serious reverse in Mr Walter Crane's alarming abortion dedicated to "Freedom." The poet Cowper writes—"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides;" but, unfortunately, this painter prefers to take inspiration from Swinburne, a poet who in his political ravings has confounded licence with liberty! The spectator is here put out of countenance by a reverie delivered as a rant; and the composition, of little rhyme and less reason, is hardly made intelligible by an appeal to the "Songs before Sunrise." A fright of an angel, between a nightmare and a scarecrow, hastens to deliver a poor wretch stretched across the foreground; his gaunt

bones are wellnigh as destitute of flesh as of drapery; yet fallen chains might seem to proclaim "freedom," did not peculiar anatomies preclude full enjoyment of the proffered boon. A pair of attendant figures or petrifications may be supposed to personify Church and State, with the suggested moral that priest and king are forthwith to be shunted into the dark ages. Happily the art is of a sort to bring little but ridicule on the questionable teaching. History, moreover, has been misread, for mediæval art respects the powers that be, and teaches that order is heaven's first law. Take as examples, in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, early frescoes which proclaim how a State suffers under violence and prospers under the rule of law. Should any of our painters incline to preach revolution, they will do well not to school their art in Greece or Italy; what they want is more readily met with in Paris!

Mr W. B. Richmond forsakes beaten paths, eschews common nature, and by refined motives puts his art into sympathetic relation to cultured minds. The painter has made himself personally familiar from time to time with classic lands; especially in a grand panorama of Carrara not to be forgotten, he recorded his poetic impressions in Italy; and now, among memories of a recent tour in Greece, he offers a suggestive sketch of "Athens in a Mist from the Road to Eleusis." Such are the antecedents which endow with exceptional interest the formidable composition, known to have been long under deliberation, "An Audience in Athens during the representation of the Agamemnon." The picture measures about ten feet by seven feet; it includes above sixty figures; and is drawn and carried out with utmost care.

Yet the failure is signal as the study is conspicuous, and the cause of the miscarriage dates back to the first conception. The piece is necessarily without dramatic action, because the stage lies outside the picture. We see only the audience, as wrought to intense and varied emotion by Clytemnestra's declamation. The painter displays a conscience above all praise; he works up the heads with the detail of miniatures; he is scrupulously accurate in costume, in architectural structure, and in topographical accessories, including the Acropolis of Athens, seen in the distance. Yet, notwithstanding, the finished product, lacking essential elements, is less a picture than a map or plan, with figures stuck in at intervals, as regular as the holes for the ashes of the dead in classic *columbariæ*. The composition is comparable to a well-filled pit of a London theatre, or to a chess-board set with pieces. And, more unfortunate than all, life has ebbed out from these statuesque personages, and the suggestion is that the greater part has been collected from museums, and compiled from dictionaries. Such an achievement would seem less for the delight of an Academy of Arts than for the edification of the Society of Antiquaries. The pictorial style is anomalous and perplexing; it is neither modern nor ancient. Should the picture be picked up by some distant posterity, and the painter and his period have become unknown, a conjecture might be ventured that the manner was Byzantine, and that the artist must be distant in date and otherwise from Apelles.

With greatest pleasure we bestow upon Mr Richmond's portraits the unstinted praise which even his admirers may this year withhold from the fond offspring of his ambition. It sometimes

happens that a man succeeds all the better when he descends from a higher sphere; the nobler truth and the subtler beauty, which may have eluded his grasp, still haunt his memory and shape his work. Mr W. B. Richmond inherits from his father, the Academician, insight into character as written by the mind on the face, and his own tastes and pursuits have made him so familiar with the best Italian art, that even in his portraits fancy is carried back to historic schools. He seems to put the question, How would an old Tuscan or Venetian have dealt with this sitter? Thus colour from Venice is reflected on "Mrs Waters"; here harmonies pitched in a deep lustrous key are caught from Palma Vecchio. The portrait hung as a companion, of an elderly buxom lady, transports the spectator from Italy to Holland. The study, in little else than black and white, suggests a Rembrandt etching; the forms and lines compose compactly, the response is close between the head and the hands, wanting which a portrait seldom expresses the whole character. Again, proximity to the studio of Romney might be suspected in the deftly pencilled profile of Miss Margerie Wormald, sharply, cleanly cut, as a head on a classic gem. The affinities between Romney and Richmond might receive ready illustration from Greek vases. These portraits evince the power of extemporising *pasticci*, just as a poet might possess the faculty of throwing off paraphrases or parodies.

Why the Grosvenor Gallery should this year find its specialty in portraiture can hardly be told, yet it merits thanks for kindly putting on view illustrious men of the time. Here and there, however, familiar acquaintances stand out as startling strangers. Indeed,

the well-known heads of Robert Browning and Charles Hallé, by their several sons, are so disastrous as to suggest the sacrifice of Isaac reversed! Other well-meant attempts are less calamitous: anyhow, Mr Herkomer's "Villiers Stanford, Esq., musical composer," is not oppressed by dignity; nor Mr Richmond's "Andrew Lang, Esq.," threatened with frivolity! Somewhat distasteful must be accounted the coarse realism wherewith Mr Holl has perpetuated the memory of the late Lord Overstone. Near at hand, the spectator is taken by storm with Mr Millais's amazingly strong version of Mr Gladstone's well-known features. This probably is the portrait of the year; firm in drawing, plucky in touch, brilliant in colour. But it cannot be affirmed of the head, as was once said in praise of a certain likeness, that from all sides, when approached, it greets everybody with a smile. Yet the eye with fierce terror follows the spectator wheresoever he may flee for refuge. The character which the artist has been successful in catching cannot be called precisely angelic; the restlessness is defiant of repose, the mobility among the features prefigures ceaseless change, the heroic set of the head threatens the Opposition with attack. In fact, the mood of mind depicted is that which Mr Gladstone, in a "personal explanation" made in the House a month or two ago, described with charming candour as "of a highly polemical and controversial character."

The Grosvenor Gallery deserves a visit, if only for the refutation it gives to the charges of the "British Matron." What possibly can be more pure-minded than "Love and Life," as depicted by Mr Watts in absolute nudity? And at a few doors' distance, in Bond Street, the lewd yet clothed

figures by Jan Van Beers clearly prove that something besides drapery is needed to shield against prurience and immorality. Mr Watts, the honoured champion of the ideal, may be taken to typify his art and his aims in the shadowy vision of "Ararat": in this picture, the lofty mountain-peaks, silent in the serene sky, soar far above the gross vapours of the lower earth.

The conclusions to which we have pointed may be summed up as follows:—

Art has sunk lower in standard in proportion as it is more widely diffused: being spread over a broader surface, it becomes shallower.

Patrons of art in like manner, as they multiply, degenerate: in place of the educated few rise the ignorant many.

Artists no longer paint up to cultured connoisseurs, but down to the common people; and this democracy among patrons and painters has vulgarised art.

Art has changed for the worse its mental aspects: it is less serious and more frivolous; less student-like, and more superficial and showy; less the issue of the higher faculties, and more the offspring of the senses.

Art, accordingly, seldom deals with the imagination and the reason: it is no longer creative; it has forsaken the walks of the ideal, and thus holds but distant fellowship with minds of calibre and culture.

Art in reverse ratio has grown naturalistic and real: something to be measured and weighed, as any other commercial commodity.

Hence the union of the ideal with the real, the perfection of Greek art, is an end beyond the aim of modern art.

The study of nature, including

man, is given to character, accident, and outward material, rather than to generic forms, governing laws, and indwelling life.

Hence modern art, as distinguished from ancient, falls short of nature's abstract and ideal types, and is content to realise creation in the concrete.

And the prevailing traits of figure-subjects pass into landscape art. Thus, historic and poetic landscapes give place to prosaic transcripts, without imaginative outlook beyond the actual and the present.

Accordingly, the pictorial arts of the day are barren and stationary, compared with the advance in science and the fecundity of poetry and romance.

In short, the fine arts have fallen below the standard and requirement of cultured minds, and fail to respond to the noblest phases of civilisation.

Such are some of the causes which have brought decline on contemporary art. And the hope of the future rests greatly in the true welfare of artists themselves, with whom we wish in conclusion to express deepest sympathy, both in their aspirations and discouragements. The next trial will come from the flood of mediocrity which, consequent on the present art craze, threatens to swamp real talent. But let the true-born artist take counsel of his better genius, knowing that victory sides not with the stoutest arm but with the best equipped mind. The devoted artist sacrifices all for his art; he flees from the tumult of the world, forsakes the vanity of fleeting fashion, and takes shelter in the quiet student life. He builds on things abiding a fame enduring. So, "through the cloud that roofs our world with night," will "break diviner light."

THE WATERS OF HERCULES.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—WISDOM AND IGNORANCE.

"For reasons not to love him once I sought,
And wearied all my thought
To vex myself and him: I now would give
My love, could he but live."

—LANDOR.

NEXT day brought no answer to the riddle.

With some difficulty a search was organised; heavy payment being necessary to induce some half-dozen of the more enlightened peasants of the valley to assist in sounding *Gaura Dracului*. But the enlightenment of these volunteers was, after all, but a question of comparison, and its measure proved to be considerably shorter than the measure of rope which was put into requisition. No man would venture beyond a certain depth; and despite hundreds of yards of rope and dozens of fir-wood torches, not the smallest trace was obtained. After several hours of hard labour, the men began to look at each other askance, and to murmur that a dead man's grave was not worth a live man's neck, and that it could matter little to the ill-fated German whether his bones were left to moulder in the abyss, or dragged up to be pompously interred. So, throwing away their torches, and shouldering their implements, they marched down-hill again, and the devils once more were left in quiet possession.

The news of the catastrophe spread quickly in the valley; the last of the departing visitors took with them this tale of horror in every shape of distorted variety. *Gaura Dracului*, whose very existence had been hitherto unknown, was on everybody's lips to-day; the event was discussed at every house-corner and under

every doorway. The two lads who were engaged in dusting and stowing away, for the winter, the velvet chairs of the Cursalon, enlivened each other's task with the latest edition of the story. In the restaurant of the old street, where the printed bill of fare had long since dwindled into a short scribbled list—quite a bill of fare *en négligé*—and where an almost unbroken quiet reigned in place of the once noisy chatter, the landlord enlarged upon the tale to the small handful of visitors. The reduced staff of waiters whispered about it to one another in their now frequent intervals of leisure. The Hercules fountain was more than ever surrounded by loiterers, whose gossiping comments mingled with the splash of the water. Even the musicians, as they made their last round this morning for a farewell concert, exchanged comments upon the deplorable event. The very children, who ran races in the deserted arcades which they had now all to themselves, spoke of the fearful thing which had happened in the mountains.

What heightened the excitement was the existence of suspense, for it was understood that there existed still a possibility of hope. It was the general run of outsiders before mentioned, those who knew least about the circumstances of the case, who most maintained this possibility. People hoped in exact proportion to their ignorance: those who knew least hoped

most; the few who suspected the truth hoped less; and only the one person who knew it, had said good-bye to hope. For Gretchen there existed no darkness,—all was as distinct as daylight.

When she awoke that morning, after a short spell of exhausted sleep, it was with a numb feeling of some great misery, which had been deadened for the space of a few hours, and which now was waiting close at hand to seize upon her afresh.

As her mind slowly cleared, she remembered it all; her heart throbbed in dull pain, and she turned her face to the pillow. It seemed to her that at that moment her whole life stretched before her far into the future,—wearisome, useless, and barren of all joy.

Many times that day did she repeat to herself the words of the Roumanian song—

“Tasted I each fragrant herb,
Sipped I of each dewy flower,
Drive thine image from my breast,
Sweetheart, none could have the
power.”

Ah no! Not on any mountain of the earth, not in any valley, not on any meadow however green, did there grow the herb Forgetfulness, which had power to give her oblivion.

She was ill all that day. Her head was burning, and her hands were cold as ice. Dr Funk called it a nervous fever, and wrote a prescription of powders, which she took without resistance. Ascelinde was hysterical and tearful, pacing the room restlessly, and relieving her feelings by long outpourings to which no one listened. She was not hard-hearted, poor woman; and now that Dr Komers had come to such a tragical end, she appeared to remember that, after all, he had been her family lawyer. She was rather

disposed to consider it a liberty on the part of the mountains, or of Hercules, or of fate in general, to have dealt so summarily with a man who had conducted for so long the affairs of the Draskócs family.

What Gretchen suffered was quite a different sort of suffering from that which Ascelinde suffered, or even Adalbert. For them there was the weight of suspense; there was a strained attention, a constant listening for every sound, anxious glances from the window, nervous starts whenever the door was unexpectedly opened. Contrasted with the restlessness of the others, Gretchen's apathy looked like indifference. No sound or exclamation was enough to make her raise her head from her arm. It had not been possible to keep the truth from Adalbert. He could not look into Gretchen's face and not guess at a misfortune. With the irritation of an invalid he had pressed them with questions, and then they told him that *Gaura Dracului* was found, but that it would have been better if the place had remained a secret to them for ever. He fainted with the excitement; he was too weak to bear the shock; and from the moment that he revived from that dead faint, he sat listening in his chair for the footstep of the man who, as he querulously persisted, must still be alive, but whom Gretchen knew to be dead.

“Never fear, Gretchen,” he would fretfully exclaim; “if he does not come back this morning, he will come this evening; if he does not come to-day, he will come back to-morrow.”

Every word was a stab to Gretchen; she could answer only by a feeble smile. How she longed for this blessed ignorance! How she yearned for her former blindness! She alone to be wise, and to sit there helpless in her terrible wis-

dom, listening to these words of mocking encouragement! She was jealous of her parents' suspense; jealous of every start and glance which betrayed that they still could hope.

As the day wore on, the general hope grew fainter. The tidings, so hungrily looked for, did not come. The great mass of mountains lay peaceful as ever in the sunlight, and the sky above was pale and cloudless, innocent as the blue of an infant's eye.

Every hour might bring the solution of the riddle, but hour after hour trailed by and did not bring it. Even upon Kurt's good-humoured and careless face an ever-deepening despondency had set its mark. Mr Howard did not appear again at the hotel. He had gone away on sudden business, Kurt said, when he was questioned.

Thus the first day of suspense came to an end, and the second day began. It was an echo of the first; and the third was an echo of the second. Imperceptibly the public excitement was losing its edge. Hope was abandoned, and the misfortune was beginning to be accepted as an accomplished fact.

Such was the general state of mind; but there was one person among the outside public who had arrived at her conclusions in a different fashion and at a different pace from the average of people. Princess Tryphosa had not forgotten a single word which István had spoken on the morning of that scene between them, and the conclusion she came to was that the lawyer's death could only be called an accident in the very widest sense of the word. She did not reach this stage in the first hour, nor even in the first day. It took her the whole first day to recover from the shock of surprise. On the second day she said to herself,

"Dr Komers is dead;" and on the third day she said, "István has killed him."

It was on this third day, when the sun still shone with the chill brilliancy which for so many weeks past had been unbroken, that Gretchen formed the resolution of writing to Anna Komers. She had scarcely thought of Anna Komers till now, nor of the blow which this would bring her. She had been too stunned herself to think of others. Now that the thought had once presented itself, it had about it a sort of bitter fascination which was not to be resisted. It was time that Anna Komers was acquainted with the truth; and Gretchen felt a jealous fear lest any one else should break the news—for no one could do it so tenderly as she would do it. She was going to extinguish the one light of joy in a lonely woman's life; but she would extinguish it with such loving fingers, that even the darkness would not be quite dark. It would be like laying a rude finger on a raw wound; but, with a sort of grim satisfaction, Gretchen felt that she would have the strength to do it. She could no longer sit thus still and inactive; she must do something positive, or else this artificial fortitude would give way. Her heart would burst if she did not confide her secret to some one; and it was towards Anna Komers that she yearned—*his* sister—the meagre, querulous woman who had loved Vincenz to idolatry, and for whom Vincenz had sacrificed his whole life, after having sinned so innocently yet so grievously against her. Anna should know now that she had triumphed. Gretchen would not spare herself. She would tell her the whole truth, and perhaps in the future she might be allowed to devote herself to the lonely old maid.

She wrote her letter sitting alone in the room which was their sitting-room. It was very still, both inside the house and out. There was scarcely a living creature within sight of the windows, and there was hardly a sign of life about the short street of the place.

It was hard to write the words which told the bitter truth: the pen made many an unsteady stroke, for Gretchen's hand was shaking nervously.

She drew a long breath when that part of her task was over. Then she hesitated for a moment, and her pale cheek flushed. Had she the courage to do the second part of her task? Would it not be better to bury the secret for ever?—barren and useless secret, which now could bear no fruit.

Her hesitation was short. It was not in her nature to do anything by halves; she would have no excuses, no modifications, no wrapping up of the truth, no patching together of the wrecks of her reasoning. Since her theories of life had failed her, she would, instead of clinging to the surviving fragments, cast their very last atoms from her; since she had been too weak to live up to that reputation which the *prix de logique* had gained her, she would proclaim her mistake, instead of masking it—she would demolish her golden calf as publicly as she had erected it. So only, by courageous avowal rather than by timid concealment, could the defeat be invested with a grim triumph of its own.

In haste, as though afraid that her resolution might waver, Gretchen went on writing.

"Do you remember the day when we quarrelled, and the words that you said to me then? Perhaps you have forgotten them, but I have not. I used to boast then

that I had no heart: ah! if I had not, I could not now be broken-hearted! You said to me then that I ought to be thankful for the love of such a man; that perhaps I should find out his value some day when it was too late. I want you to know that it has come true. I am more thankful for the thought that he has loved me, than for any other blessing in the world. Now that he is gone, I have found out that I loved him—since when, I do not know, nor how it began. His great love, which I so little deserved, conquered me at last; but he never guessed it, since I did not guess it myself. The thought which weighs most heavily on my mind is, that he should have died thinking me still the heartless creature that I tried to be. If he could have known that I never loved any man but him, and will never love any other; if he could know now that I am mourning for him,—I should not have that bitter remorse in my heart. Twice he asked me to be his wife, and twice I refused. His love appeared to me then to be a trifle, or at most a burden; and now I would go on my knees, if any prayers could give me back one look of his, or one touch of his hand—one moment only to tell him of my penitence. He would not have offered me his love a third time—he vowed that he would not do it; and in time he would have found out that I am not good enough to be his wife. But it is no use thinking of what cannot be now——"

The colour was burning high in Gretchen's face long ere she had reached this point; but she persevered—she meant to deal unmercifully with herself.

She paused for a moment, and passed her hand over her eyes; there was a mist of tears obscuring her sight, and one drop had fallen

on the paper, blotting the fresh ink. Her head was aching wearily. The veins in her temples throbbed; there was a dull surging sound in her ears. The mist slowly cleared from her eyes, but that surging sound continued. It was a sound as of far-off waves washing along a coast, or the distant sigh of wind, or the murmur of many voices.

It was disagreeably persistent, and it was gradually but imperceptibly swelling. Could this be no more than a nervous fancy? The sound no longer seemed to be in her head; it was something outside her—something that was not even in the room, but which came floating through the window from down there in the valley.

Gretchen went to the window. The valley lay before her as lifeless as it had been during all this still afternoon, but not quite as

silent. That sound was distinctly floating upwards; it had detached itself from the aching throb of her head. It was individual and apart. It was growing less like the sweep of waves and wind, and more and more was it becoming like the murmur of many voices. And other ears than her own had heard the sounds: for here and there a window was flung open and a head was stuck out; a waiter with a napkin under his arm came out of the restaurant, and stood staring up the valley, though as yet there was nothing to be seen. Gretchen remained at the window with the pen still in her hand. She saw the empty road, without a living creature in sight; but that murmur of voices was swelling, and she kept her eyes fixed on the turn which in another moment must disclose to her its cause.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—THE STORY OF A TOADSTOOL.

Once upon a time there was a little white toadstool, born of pale dews and of stealthy saps, high up on the branch of a stately forest-tree. It was snowy white; and when the moonbeams fell upon it, it looked like a white blossom which had grown up there by mistake. But the flowers that carpeted the forest scoffed and jeered at it, and said—

“What good are you to any one? You are not beautiful, you are not a flower. We make the forest glorious with our painted bells, we gild the green moss, we scent the breeze, we nod from the hunter’s cap, and sometimes the shepherd makes a nosegay of us for his love; but no one cares to gather you. No peasant even will take the trouble to eat you; for there are plenty like you at the foot of the trees. You are of no use; you are nothing but a toadstool!”

And the toadstool sighed, and repeated humbly, “I know it; I am nothing but a toadstool!”

And summer and winter came and went for many, many years, and the toadstool still sat on the branch of the tree, and mourned over its melancholy lot. And it grew and grew, and hardened into wood, until it became as part of the tree; and as each spring came round, and the flowers awoke from their winter sleep, they looked up mockingly and began their old jests.

“What, old toadstool! are you there still?” the white anemones cried, and shook with laughter as they recognised him.

“He has grown so tough and so hard,” said the spring crocuses, as they pointed up at him with their long straight fingers—“so tough and so hard, that not even a hungry peasant would eat him now.”

Even the violets, these spoilt children of the spring, nudged each other and tittered, as they peeped at the old weather-beaten toadstool.

"Old toadstool! old toadstool! are you not yet tired of sitting up there? Has no one eaten you yet, old toadstool?"

And the flowers laughed till they shook again, and repeated their joke to the breeze, who liked it so well that he went murmuring through the forest, "It is only a toadstool; a useless old toadstool!"

But one evening when the toadstool was weeping in the moonlight, with the dewdrops sparkling all around it, the spirit of the forest passed by and said—

"Toadstool, why dost thou weep?"

And it answered, "I am weeping because I am only a toadstool; I am no use to any one, and I have grown tough and hard. It would be more merciful if the woodman would take his axe and strike me off the tree, to end my useless life."

The spirit answered, "Toadstool, weep no more. Listen no more to the jests of the foolish flowers: let them laugh now and jeer; they will yet bow before thee some day. A great honour is in store for thee! I have placed thee there on the tree, and let thee grow large from year to year, so thou shouldst shine at night like a beacon and save the life of a noble man."

Hearing this, the toadstool wept no more. And when spring came round again and the flowers crept out from under their mossy coverings, they did not laugh nor jest; the anemones hung their pale heads, the crocuses stood agape with wonder, and the violets hid their faces in the grass—for the flowers knew that though their painted bells might gild the moss and scent the breeze, though some fair shepherdess might prize them as a love-token, yet they could never save a human life as the tough old toadstool had done.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—THE POLITICAL SPY.

"The accident of an accident."—LORD THURLOW.

When Vincenz, in blind confidence, turned, as he had been told, sharp to the left, he experienced a violent blow against his face, coming from a low-hanging branch which he had not perceived. His spectacles were struck off as well as his hat, and it took him some minutes before he could disentangle himself from his position. Having succeeded in this, he looked about for his hat and spectacles. The hat was close at hand, but the spectacles were not; and the ground being in darkness, and he being half blind without his glasses, a long and tedious search proved unavailing. He had just come to the

conclusion that he must abandon the hope of finding them, when, looking up, he found himself again close to the tree with the white signal on it. The moonlight still struck upon it, and Vincenz put out his hand to feel the handkerchief.

It was no handkerchief, however, his first touch told him; he had expected to grasp thin folds, instead of which his hand came in contact with a hard and woody surface. He looked nearer, and felt it all over, unable at first to imagine what this enigmatical white object could be. It proved to be a large fungus grown out of

the wood of the tree, of a shining grey texture, and whitened by the moonlight into the semblance of a dazzlingly pale flower. Even a man less short-sighted and less absent-minded than Vincenz, might in this deceitful light have taken a fungus for a handkerchief.

He had mistaken the signal then, and if the handkerchief were not on this tree, it must be on some other tree a few paces farther on. A few paces farther on sounds a simple matter indeed; but a few paces in which direction? was the question to be decided. Having groped about for several minutes on the ground, Vincenz had lost all sense of direction. He took his chance now, turning the way which seemed to him most likely, but which happened to be one of the numerous wrong ways instead of the only right one. He went on from tree to tree, examining each trunk, and coming upon many more toadstools, but no handkerchief. When he had examined more than half-a-dozen trees, he came to the conclusion that he had turned the wrong way, and again changed his direction. More toadstools here, and as little sign of a handkerchief as before. The first direction must have been the right one after all, he thought; but which way did it now lie? Who could tell him that? Not the solemn beech-trees all around, nor the squirrels that were asleep up there on the branches. He had been walking more than ten minutes now, and he began to confess to himself that he had lost his way. It is a confession which no one likes to make, even to himself; and in this case the fact was not only highly inconvenient, but might be attended by serious consequences.

He quickened his pace, trusting more or less to fate; and when Vincenz chose to put out his

strength, his long-limbed frame could get over the ground at a marvellous pace. He had relinquished his examination of the trees now, and, without any special pang of regret, given up the hope both of the handkerchief and the hole. His only thought was to rejoin the others. He walked on faster and faster, fancying that he recognised the surroundings now and then, and expecting at every turn to come upon the waiting people around the fallen tree-trunk. Thus, thanks to his walking powers, Vincenz in less than half an hour was entirely out of earshot, and getting rapidly farther every moment from the point which he wished to reach. The trees were all so exactly alike, and Vincenz was so helpless without his spectacles, that more than once he was deceived into believing himself close to his object. He was sure of it at last when all at once a faint glimmer of a light shone out far ahead. He might have been mistaken the first time, for the light was uncertain; but when it flashed out again, he saw that it was real, and with a renewal of hope and an acceleration of pace he walked straight towards it. He knew that the Bohemian carried a lantern with him, in case of their being overtaken by darkness before reaching home, as would be the case to-day. This certainly must be the light of the lantern, for it glowed deep orange in contrast to the white moonlight. He could see nothing of the surroundings, nor any moving figure, for the circle of light was feeble: he only saw that orange speck, and towards it he walked straight and fast.

Decidedly it was a light kindled by human hands. It grew and grew, till it became larger even than he expected it to be—larger than a lantern. He kept his eyes

upon it, not daring to look away ; and it went on growing and growing, till its size could have furnished light enough for at least a dozen lanterns. It was a small smouldering fire, as Vincenz saw as he drew nearer, and therefore it was evident that this was not the place where he had left his friends. But he did not slacken his pace for all that, for by this time he was beginning to feel mildly desperate. He was weary of walking among the trees and seeing nothing but moonlight and shadow. Where there was a fire, there must be hands that had kindled it ; and the same men who had hands to light a fire, might be presumed to possess tongues with which they could direct a lost traveller how to find the right way.

Then he lost sight of it, and walked on for a few minutes, seeing nothing, when all at once it started up again, close before him this time. The orange spot had become a mass of half-burnt fir-wood, still flaming here and there, and sinking lower every instant into the bed of grey ashes below. The trees around stood so close as to bar the moonlight, and the leaping of the last orange flames lighted up the under side of a few branches with vivid touches of yellow.

The sudden flood of light dazzled Vincenz ; he saw nothing but the dancing flame, and some very deep shadows round it. The shadows were unusually deep—almost definite in their shape, but perfectly immovable.

He walked up close to the fire, kicked one of the outlying embers in order to assure himself of its reality, and then recovered from a violent stumble.

Strangely enough, it was over one of the immovable shadows that he had stumbled, which appeared to be more substantial than

shadows usually are. At the same time the shadow developed some other strange attributes : it started up from a horizontal into a perpendicular position, and in a very unshadowlike manner seized hold of the lawyer's arm. The shadow had a voice too, it seemed, and commenced proving the fact by muttering some unintelligible but uncomplimentary-sounding expletives between its teeth.

Shadow or no shadow, Vincenz had no idea of being held in this unceremonious fashion ; he shook his right arm free, but in the same instant of time felt his left arm imprisoned. The shadow on the other side of the fire had become alive also, and was unquestionably more substantial than the first. The lawyer's eyes were beginning to grow more accustomed to the light, and he now recognised on each side of him a man on whose features the firelight fell with great distinctness. He could see that the first was gaunt, unshaved, hollow-eyed, and repulsively dirty in aspect ; and that the second man had all these qualities enhanced, and, as it were, enlarged, by the superior size and strength of his frame.

At first Vincenz was very much at a loss how to account for their existence and conduct ; but when, after a few seconds, he was able to distinguish their appearance more closely, the truth gradually dawned upon him. He began to recall the details of the milkmaid's story, and the picture which she had drawn of her assailant : " half a soldier and half a demon " had been the definition which she was reported to have given ; and if in the individuals now before Vincenz there was nothing which, except by a stretch of imagination, could be called diabolical, there certainly was something which flavoured of

warfare. They both wore tattered trousers, with a narrow red line down the sides, which gave them a military stamp even in the midst of their ruin. Such trousers had been worn by the pillager of the milkmaid's cheese. It was only reasonable to suppose that he found himself in presence of the milkmaid's robber, and of a second and smaller edition of the same type. This opinion was presently confirmed by the vigour with which they ransacked his pockets—a proceeding to which he much objected, but which, in the face of two long-barrelled pistols, he felt helpless to avert.

Besides the pistols, the taller of the two men possessed a musket; and a steel knife, with an elaborately engraved blade, at this moment stuck in and out of his trousers just below the knee. In the ordinary course of things the knife would have been sheathed in the top of his high boot; but in this case the arrangement was rendered unfeasible by the fact that the two men did not possess one boot between them. The handkerchief, pocket-book, and purse of the captive were thrown aside, perhaps for later consideration. Some remains of sandwich, however, were seized upon—the men tore the stale bread out of each other's hands and devoured it greedily; the flask which Vincenz had carried, and which was about half full of spirits, was joyously clutched.

The examination was over. The smaller man looked at the larger, and shook his head; the larger one returned the look, and scratched his head. They consulted together in some unknown tongue, either Servian or Roumanian; then put some questions to Vincenz, which were, of course, unintelligible. Further dissatisfaction. "*Njamcz—*

Njamczule" (German), they said to each other. Another short consultation, and then it was signified to Vincenz that he must take a place by the fire.

This was exactly what Vincenz desired to do; he was tired and chill, and in the midst of the lonely forest this wild fireside looked almost like a home. Despite the doubtful security of his position, it was with a sigh of heartfelt satisfaction that he let himself down on the grass. The robbers placed themselves carefully one on each side of him, and then there followed a short interval of silence. The two men looked alternately at each other and at their captive. The elder scratched his head more than once. It was very evident, now that the first excitement had subsided, that the possession of their prisoner somewhat embarrassed them. A prisoner who walks straight into his captor's hands is no doubt a valuable prize; captives are as little in the habit of doing so, as roast-pigeons are accustomed to fly into the mouths of the hungry. Such conduct was gratifying, the very *beau idéal* of a captive's behaviour; but now the situation was becoming puzzling. What were they to do with him? Each man racked the small amount of brains he had in order to find a satisfactory answer to the question. During this silence Vincenz had a fancy that he could hear somewhere in the forest, very far off, the sound of a voice shouting. He was not sure that he heard right, but yet the thought did cross his mind that it might be the voice of some of the party calling to him. He raised his voice upon this chance; but the shout was instantly stifled by a very dirty hand, while the unanswerable argument of a loaded pistol forced him to hold his tongue. "*Tasch! tasch!*"

(hush! hush!) was hissed into his ear from either side. The distant voices soon died off in another direction, and were heard no more.

The two men resumed their position as before, again scratching their heads, and again gazing at their captive.

Vincenz saw their indecision, and waited patiently for them to decide. He made himself very comfortable by the fire in the meantime, for the glowing embers were grateful on this chill autumn night. Nothing would have been easier than for these two men to put an end to him quietly, and hide the traces for ever in this dense forest. Vincenz fully recognised the force of their position and the weakness of his own, but at the same time he saw no immediate grounds for alarm.

In the first moment the robbers had looked formidable enough, but alarm had quickly given way to pity. They looked so hungry, so ragged, so footsore and weary, that, thinking of the hundred and one stories that had been circulated in the Hercules Baths, and of the number of patrols who had walked about with fixed bayonets to protect the place from surprise, Vincenz could almost have laughed aloud. These two starved deserters from the Serbian army had kept the place in terror for weeks; they were the kernel of truth, stripped of its outer shell of exaggeration. Lying on the grass beside them was the clean-picked skeleton of some small forest-bird, and a number of berry-branches stripped of their very last berry. This little heap of wrecks was eloquent in its ghastly tale. Vincenz wished most heartily that he could conjure to the spot some remains of cold meat which he remembered having been thrust back into the provision-basket. He could well

imagine how those poor sunken eyes would kindle, had he been in the position to present a chicken-bone to each man. They were a pitiful sight, poor wretches; and yet, by virtue of those long-barrelled pistols, Vincenz was in their power. It was in a very amateur fashion that they now set about the examination of their booty. First they emptied the purse, and managed to lose about half the contents in the moss while quarrelling over it; then they ransacked the pocket-book, under the delusion that it was another sort of purse; finally, they spread out the pocket-handkerchief, turned it over and over in perplexity, but could make nothing of the article. Vincenz watched the sacking of his purse with equanimity; but he winced when they attacked the pocket-book, for this was the same battered old pocket-book which, a year ago, Gretchen had stitched together for him, and for the sake of those stitches Vincenz valued it far above every other possession.

While they searched, the two men handed the articles backwards and forwards to each other across their prisoner, consulting at the same time as to the great question which weighed on their minds. Vincenz did not know what they were saying, but their conversation was about as follows:—

“Ha, Sancu!” said the smaller bandit, who was loquacious in speech, and apparently undecided in manner.

“He, Duman?” answered the larger one, who spoke laconically, and looked inflexible.

“He was hardly worth catching, was he? There is nothing of any good except the spirits in that bottle. Let’s have a pull, Sancu,” stretching across Vincenz a brown hand stained with red berry-juice.

"Wait for your turn, Duman," says Sancu from behind the flask.

"Ha, Sancu!"

"He, Duman?"

"What shall we do with him?"

Upon this Sancu scratched his head repeatedly, and having handed the flask across, proceeded dubiously to gnaw his thumb-nail, as though expecting to suck wisdom therefrom.

"Ha, Sancu!"

"He, Duman?"

"Shall we let him run?" asked the smaller man, whose heart was perhaps softened by the spirits.

"Let him run? and bring down the soldiers on our backs? A pistol-shot would be quicker than that;" and Sancu's fingers played with the trigger for a moment.

Duman, strengthened by another pull at the flask, expressed some contemptuous opinions regarding the soldiery of the country.

"Let them come! Poor fellows, they will walk through the soles of their shoes before they get a sight of us!"

"True," said Sancu; "they might lose each other, but they would not find us."

"Ha, ha! it is not every one who knows the *muntze* (mountains) as well as his pocket; ha, Sancu?"

"This big *Njamczule* does not, or he would not be sitting here between us now."

"It would be a pity to shoot him, I think; ha, Sancu?"

"He looks as if he could fight," said Sancu; and then the flask being drained to the last drop, both Sancu and Duman sat still, staring at their prisoner in some perplexity, and quite as curious to know what the issue would be as Vincenz himself.

A new turn was given to matters now by the introduction of tobacco on the scene. These novices had failed to discover in an

inner pocket of the lawyer's coat a cigar-case containing two cigars. Here was a scope for giving expression to some of the compassion which he felt towards his captors. Vincenz forgot his precarious position at sight of the absolute beatitude which spread over the two haggard faces. "Tobacco-lovers who have not sniffed the scent of the divine herb for weeks past," was written on both countenances. And this was something higher than the pipe of their ordinary life. A cigar had hitherto been a sort of unattainable ideal in the eyes of these two men. But the conduct of Sancu and Duman was characteristically distinct at this supreme moment of their lives. Sancu showed his independence and decision by immediately taking up a paper which lay on the grass—one of the papers which had come to light in the examination of the booty—and pushing it into the red embers to light the cigar. Duman, on the contrary, seemed unable to make up his mind thus quickly to exhaust the spell of bliss he knew to be contained in these three inches of brown weed. The delight was so exquisite that it required to be dwelt upon and drawn out to the utmost limits of its tension. He first gazed at the cigar, then smelt it with great enjoyment, then licked it all over, finally wrapped it up in the half-burnt piece of paper which Sancu had thrown aside, and stored it away carefully inside his linen shirt. But the process did not end here. The treasure had to be taken out at intervals in order that Duman should assure himself of its reality: there were moments of indecision as to whether he would not yield to the temptation of immediate enjoyment, and then another wrapping up and another stowing away of the treasure next

to his skin. Finally a bright thought struck him. If he did not make sure of the cigar, it was certain that Sancu would take it from him by the right of might. This ended all indecision; and in another moment a second curl of smoke rose up from the lawyer's right side.

The combined effects of the spirits and the tobacco were beginning to tell upon both men. A more genial frame of mind was stealing over the bandits. They began to chant a drinking-song—a monotonous drawling tune, somewhat nasal in accent, but wild and striking amid these surroundings:—

“Marko, the great Marko,
Was a warrior strong;
Ere he went to battle,
Drank he deep and long.

Deep drank the great Marko,
For the wine was good,
Steeled his arm for battle,
Made him thirst for blood.

Brothers! Marko's children!
This is what I think:
Would ye fight like Marko,
First like Marko drink!”

It died off by degrees; it grew more drawling and more dismal. First Duman's head sank down on his arms; Vincenz thought he was asleep, but in the next moment he looked up drowsily.

“Ha, Sancu!”

“He, Duman?”

“We will not shoot him now, will we?”

Sancu was too far gone to answer with anything but a shake of the head. It was evident that the cigars had turned the scale, and that for the present at least the lawyer's life was in no danger.

They were both asleep, one on each side of him. Vincenz himself felt mildly drowsy. His sensations were of an agreeable sort. The position he was in was somewhat ludicrous, if also precarious. This

was a new experience of life certainly: it brought with it a pleasurable feeling of excitement; it was a refreshing change from the drudgery of desk-existence. He wondered what the others would think of his disappearance, whether they would be anxious. It did not occur to him that they would conclude that he had fallen a victim to *Gaura Dracului*, especially as he had not seen *Gaura Dracului* himself, and therefore was unable to realise the danger. It was very pleasant sitting here; he was stiff and tired with his long walk, and felt a disinclination to rise, a drowsy unwillingness to move. And yet this was the moment for escape, if ever there was one. With an effort he succeeded in rousing himself.

Sancu was snoring, Duman was breathing as softly as an innocent child in its cradle. It was best to leave them when in this Christian peacefulness of soul; after a few hours' sleep they might change their minds about shooting him. He thought of disarming them for greater safety; but Sancu slept with his pistol in his hand, and Duman slept with his under his body, so that project had to be abandoned.

Vincenz rose to his feet softly. He had nothing to do but to walk away noiselessly; the inexperienced bandits had taken no precautions to prevent his escape. With a sort of delightful *naïve* confidence they had left his hands and feet untied. The lawyer stood for a moment looking down at them; they neither of them moved. He walked away a few steps and looked back; they still lay immovable. Now he quickened his pace, and paused only when he had got to a distance of fifty yards. Everything was silent. His departure had been unnoticed then, and he was free.

But just now some spirit, good or evil, whispered a thought into his ear. He remembered that on the grass beside the sleeping robbers there lay that old pocket-book, which was worthless except for those few stitches in its battered cover. He had for so long held it precious as a treasure, that he felt it now impossible to abandon it thus to its fate. Was it to be fingered again by the robbers' dirty fingers, or perhaps left to lie and rot in the forest? Were the snails to crawl over it, and the spider to use it as a convenient scaffolding for its web? Was the winter snow to bury it, and the April rains to melt it into pulp? That could never be; and without giving himself time for further reflection, Vincenz had turned and was retracing his steps. It was without exception the most foolish act he had ever been guilty of in his life. For a man of his age—a man who, moreover, was generally supposed to be a cool-headed lawyer—deliberately to risk his life for the sake of a mere memory, was a rashness little short of folly.

He tried to temper his folly with prudence. When he got within a few paces of the sleeping men, he dropped on his knees, and thus on all-fours approached the spot where the brigands still lay immovable. He could thus pass noiselessly over the dry withered grass, which had crackled so obnoxiously under his footsteps. His empty purse and the scattered coins lay beside San cu; but he scarcely saw those—he saw only the battered pocket-book on the grass. The lawyer's hand crept towards it; his fingers closed over it, and, clutching it eagerly, he turned to go the way he had come.

Perhaps his gesture had been too unguarded, for a dead twig, brittle with long dryness, snapped just

then. San cu turned his head sleepily, and for one moment Vincenz found himself staring close into a pair of startled and only half-awakened eyes. There was an oath muttered, and San cu scrambled to his feet; while Vincenz, not waiting to see more, had risen also, and was running with all his strength and swiftness blindly into the dark forest. How he thanked Providence as he sped along for the length of limb with which it had pleased it to bless him! Behind him there were angry cries and the sound of a momentary confusion; then a pause, and then the sharp crack of a pistol-shot. The bullet whistled past him, several yards wide of the mark, and Vincenz ran on unhurt. He listened for more shots, but nothing followed; the cries even broke off. He stood still to recover breath. The pocket-book was tightly grasped in his hand. It was evident that he was no longer being pursued. That one shot, discharged in the first flurry of awakening, had been enough to salve the brigands' conscience, and they now stood staring at each other, open-mouthed indeed with wonder, but not exhibiting much distress.

"Ha, San cu!" said Duman.

"He, Duman?" said San cu.

"Are you sorry that the *Njamez* is gone?"

"I am glad, Duman."

No doubt, as they turned over to sleep again on the moss, the dreams of these simple robbers will have been all the sweeter for the unlooked-for solution of their perplexity.

There was no need to run now; and Vincenz, slackening his pace, groped on in the darkness. How long he walked, he did not know; he rested at intervals, and went on again, without ever coming

upon a distinct path. After a time the trees lightened, and then ceased. Vincenz found himself walking down a steep incline, clothed, as far as he could ascertain by this light, in brushwood and fine tufted grass. This was all as it should be. He had come up-hill to get here, therefore he must necessarily go down-hill to reach the Hercules Baths. Here also there was no path, and the grass was slippery; so, having walked some hours, and coming upon a sheltered spot, Vincenz in sheer weariness lay down to sleep. It was no use walking on in the dark. Dawn would in all likelihood show him the Hercules Baths at his feet.

When he awoke, the first streak of dawn was in the sky. The thin cold light of early morning was over the scene before him, but it did not show him the Hercules Baths at his feet. This was a wider landscape, with a great stretch of sky overhead. It was all a mass of undulating forest, thickly grown, and unbroken by those rocky points which gave to the Hercules valley its peculiar character of beauty. Here, too, there was much beauty, but of a tamer, less rugged sort. There was but one break in the uniformity of the autumn-tinged landscape; and that break consisted of an irregular assembly of what, at this distance, looked like dirty-white molehills, inhabited apparently by gigantic moles. What between the mistiness of the dawn and his own ignorance, Vincenz was for a time utterly at a loss what to make of the molehills; and half in curiosity and half in hope, he set off towards them, by good luck hitting anon upon a rough cart-track, which ran past the bottom of the hill, and made straight for the mysterious yellow-white specks.

He was very cold and very hungry—furiously hungry, as he suddenly became conscious. If he thought now of the cold chicken in the provision-basket, it was not for the sake of the robbers, but for his own. He was tormented by thirst too, and there was water in sight. He walked on with the step of a hungry man, seeing no sign of life until he had drawn quite close to the molehills: here a bushy head stuck out of an opening told him that the inhabitants were not moles, but human beings; that the mounds, therefore, were huts, and the whole a village.

He entered the first hut—or rather descended into it, for it was no more than a square deep hole dug in the ground, with an enclosure of plaited rushes cemented with mud, and a flat roof of the same construction. Within this enclosure, where, by reason of his stature, Vincenz could not attempt to stand upright, there were assembled a congregation consisting of one man, two women, several children (Vincenz counted five, and there seemed to be as many more indistinctly visible in corners), a cow, a sheep, and two pigs. He was stared at with very evident astonishment, and answered with shakes of the head when he tried the experiment of both German and Hungarian. The man who was evidently the master of the house was reclining on a flat wooden bench, and smoking, while two women and the elder of the children were working by the sweat of their brow.

The language in which they spoke Vincenz recognised as the same used by the peasants of the valley, and therefore Roumanian. When he asked for *apa* (water), the one word of the language which circumstances had taught him, he was directed to a wooden cask

which stood in a corner. Towards this Vincenz made his way, stumbling as he passed over two pigs and several children. He dipped a small earthenware pot into the cask, and to his surprise found himself drinking a very tolerable white wine. He had not yet learned that wine is a commodity more easily obtained than water in this rich but somewhat disorganised part of Europe.

There was nothing further to be got here; and Vincenz, half choked by the stifling atmosphere, made his way back to the fresh air.

Here a knot of curious peasants had gathered to stare at the strange phenomenon of a civilised human being. The whole village street was in a state of ferment, unable to account for the existence of this tall, bearded, and pale-faced stranger.

Vincenz was escorted by a *cor-tège* as he made his way onwards; but he had not gone very far when his progress was unexpectedly and violently checked. A handful of ruffian-like individuals were approaching him up the street. So disreputable was their attire, and so unkempt their appearance, that had not a recent and close acquaintance with the mountain-robbers assured him of their individuality, Vincenz would have been inclined to consider that these were the bandits. Appearances are proverbially deceitful; far from being bandits, it was evident, from the respectful demeanour of the peasants, that these ragged and barefooted individuals were persons not merely "dressed in a little brief authority," but of recognised standing. As they drew nearer, Vincenz was able to see that there existed a certain uniformity about the rags they wore: each man had on his head a sheepskin cap, more or less mangy and more or less filthy;

and each one also wore at least some remains of what had once been a long grey cloak.

The peasants made way as they approached; Vincenz found himself in the centre of a circle. They spoke to him in Roumanian, and he understood nothing; then one man stepped forward, and in Hungarian explained to him that, in case of not being able to give a satisfactory reason for his presence, he was to consider himself under arrest. Thanks to the intricacies of the Damianovics cause, Vincenz's acquaintance with the Hungarian language was sufficient for the occasion. He inquired the cause of this strange arrest.

"An unauthorised and suspicious traversing of the frontier," replied the least ragged of the ruffian-like men.

"Which frontier?" asked Vincenz, bewildered.

"The frontier of Roumania."

"This, then, is Roumania?"

Yes, he was told, this was the great and glorious country of Roumania, which he had dared to invade unsanctioned, but which no stranger could invade unpunished. These individuals, some of whom were barefoot, and the best preserved of whom had their feet swaddled in checked woollen rags (the *Opintschen* of the country), were nothing less than members of the corps of *Dorobanze* (Frontier Guardians), whose patriotic zeal had risen fifty per cent in this time of war.

"If you have papers to prove yourself harmless," said the first speaker, sternly, "produce them; if you have none, you are our prisoner: follow us!"

The ruffian-like individual's speech was received by the crowd with a murmur of applause. The peasants pressed round again to see what the stranger would do. It was a moment of perplexity

to Vincenz. He knew himself to be perfectly harmless, and in no way endangering the safety of the great and glorious Roumanian State, but he wondered how he was to prove it. As was his habit at critical junctures, he put up his hand to take off his spectacles and rub them; but the movement reminded him that he had no spectacles on. However, at the same time, he remembered that though he had no spectacles he had a passport, and that at once would clear the way. Had not Tolnay sneeringly observed, in reference to the passport, that Vincenz was the only member of the party who could safely pass the frontier of Roumania? The thought of that paper was grateful and comforting. In his inmost soul he blessed Anna's sisterly anxiety. When he had risked so much to recover the pocket-book, he had not thought of the papers it contained; but now it seemed as if this piece of folly was going to bear salutary fruits after all.

He took out the battered case, he opened it. The passport was not in the first flap, it was not in the second, not in the third. In the fourth there was a paper, but it was not the passport; it was the last letter he had received from Anna. With great distinctness Vincenz now remembered that Sancu and Duman had lit their cigars with the fragments of a paper which exactly answered to the description of the missing passport. And he himself had presented those cigars of his own free will. Oh irony of fate!

Involved in these painful reflections, Vincenz stood in the centre of the circle, but was roused speedily out of his train of thought by his former interrogator, who calmly possessed himself of the letter which Vincenz still held, and submitted it to a close examination.

It was turned over suspiciously, and handed about from man to man. Heads were shaken and shoulders shrugged. There was a great deal of murmuring and undertone whispering which resulted in the question—

"What is your name?"

"Vincenz Komers."

"What profession do you follow?"

"I am a lawyer."

A lawyer! The word was translated and repeated around the circle, amid renewed shakes of the head.

Then came a startling question:

"Are you a political spy?"

"Certainly not," said Vincenz, with some surprise and a little indignation.

"He says he is *not* a political spy," repeated the questioner, turning triumphantly to the circle; "that is very suspicious!" And the circle echoed that it was very suspicious indeed.

"No," said Vincenz; "I have told you what I am."

The triumphant smile on the face of the questioner remained imperturbed, as this time also he translated the answer for the benefit of the circle.

"How did you come here?"

"On my legs," Vincenz felt very much inclined to answer; but he said, "From the forest."

"Aha! of course—a nest of hiding-places. What were you doing there?"

"I had lost my way."

"He had lost his way!" The *Dorobanze* roared at the simplicity of the answer. As if political spies ever lost their way!

"What is your mission?" asked the chief *Dorobanze*, rolling his eyes at Vincenz, as though meditating where to take his first bite at the victim.

"My mission at present," said

Vincenz, losing his temper, "is to find my way home."

"It will be a rather long way," said the chief *Dorobanze*, grimly.

It seemed to be a fundamental principle in such a case as this, immediately and unhesitatingly to take for granted that the answer given was the exact reverse of the truth. Vincenz having said that he was a lawyer and not a political spy on a secret mission, seemed to lead to the natural conclusion that he was precisely what he denied, and that whatever profession he might be connected with, that profession would be anything *but* that of the law. The interrogator seemed to be evidently much pleased with himself and with his ingenuity—more so still when, to his great delight, and after several vain attempts, he succeeded in spelling out the name of Schleppenheim, from which Anna's letter was dated. Schleppenheim was a German town; this doubled every suspicion. Clearly the man before them was a very political spy on a very secret mission.

In a most unceremonious fashion Vincenz was marshalled through the crowd, up the village street, and finally into a wooden cart of peculiar construction, to which were harnessed a pair of *buffels*, shaggy and diabolical-looking animals, which slowly drew the creaking construction up and down the miniature hillocks and valleys of a real Roumanian cart-track.

This cart did not creak merely as ordinary carts do upon an ordinarily bad road; but being framed entirely of wood, without a nail or a morsel of metal about its whole construction, it groaned and swayed and loudly complained, until, after an hour of this experience, Vincenz, without much expenditure of imagination, could fancy himself enduring the tortures of

purgatory in the midst of the aching lamentations of a host of fellow-sufferers.

He had been told that his destination was the nearest town; but as to his fate, he was kept in the dark, and had ample leisure for doleful speculations on the possibilities in store for him. The man who had spelled out the date of the letter was so enchanted with his discovery that he could not part with his treasure, but sat gazing enraptured at the paper during the whole of the tedious journey. Vincenz, hungry and inexpressibly bored, began to think over almost with regret the hours he had spent in the small brigand camp, and to long for the society of Sancu and Duman in place of these morose and suspicious men. It had indeed been suggested to him, with an eloquent glance directed to his coat-pocket, that in case he should feel himself in an especially liberal frame of mind, these ardent guardians of the frontier would find it possible to sacrifice a little patriotic feeling—that a few silver pieces, in fact, would have the effect of reconciling their consciences with the risk which the liberty of such a dangerous individual must necessarily bring to the great and glorious country. But, alas! Vincenz knew too well that his coat-pockets were empty. His memory, which a few minutes ago had so distinctly drawn for him the picture of the singed and smouldering passport, now with equal clearness showed him the little heap of scattered coins which lay strewn on the moss of the forest.

The sun was high in the sky when the groaning cart drew up at last; but the lawyer's troubles had by no means reached their end. The so-called "town" proved to be a sandy desert, with some fifty houses dropped down upon it, ap-

parently by mistake, each without any regard to its neighbour, and standing at every possible and impossible angle to each other, which gave them a surprising and unpremeditated look. It was in front of the first of these unpremeditated houses that Vincenz and his escort had come to a standstill. This was a square, whitewashed construction, in front of which a man, with one boot on and with a gun on his shoulder, sauntered up and down. From his habit of standing still sometimes, without apparent cause, and going through some incomprehensible manoeuvre with his firearm, Vincenz concluded him to be under the impression that he was standing sentry. There was a great deal of miscellaneous conversation and good-humoured bantering between the sentinel and the men in charge of the supposed political spy. The sentinel was so delighted at some joke of one of his comrades, that he felt compelled, in a friendly manner, to poke the joker in the ribs with the butt-end of his gun. Another man appeared on the scene: from the fact of his wearing two boots, Vincenz guessed him to be an officer. The cheerful and unprejudiced manner in which this man (upon duty) joined in the conversation of his subordinates, was refreshing to witness, for any one accustomed to European discipline. There was, in fact, no trace of discipline or order anywhere.

There was a great deal of talking and shoutings, to make up, however. Vincenz again was questioned, and again the reverse of what he said was regarded as the true statement. There being no proof for the fact of his being a political spy, only made his case worse. It proved that he was well skilled in his mission, therefore all the more dangerous. As result, Vincenz found

himself confined in a small, narrow room, scrupulously whitewashed, but also scrupulously bare. There was but one window to this place of captivity, and that was crossed with iron bars. Here finally he was left to his own meditations, being at irregular intervals, and as it were only by accident, supplied with food in the shape of *mama-liga*—a species of porridge made of Indian corn—accompanied, incongruously enough, with a liberal supply of well-flavoured wine.

As hour after hour passed, his meditations became gloomy. Up to the moment when he had entered that fatal village, there had been nothing to complain of. The adventure had been almost enjoyable until that point was reached. But now matters were changed. He had not been much alarmed at first at the prospect of arrest; it was only now that he began to recognise the disagreeables of his position. Arguments and assurances were exhausted; they had proved worse than useless. And now, as he sat in his whitewashed cell, he remembered every word which the Bohemian had said on the day when he warned Gretchen against crossing the Roumanian frontier in the valley: "They lock you up, and then sometimes forget all about you for weeks." Here was an inspiring prospect! Was he going to be overtaken by the same fate as that of the German gentleman whose friends had discovered him only after a month of search? It was not likely that the friends in this case would be more speedily successful, if indeed they would take so much trouble. Vincenz was not used to spend much thought upon himself; therefore he had no true conception of the anxiety which his disappearance was causing. Least of all did he imagine that Gretchen could

be made seriously uneasy by the occurrence.

This day was interminable, but the next day was worse. Nothing to do but to pace his cell, or stand staring out by the narrow grating, which could only frame one very small picture at a time.

The one-booted sentinel, the object most frequently within sight, would have been ready enough for conversation, but unfortunately the linguistic attainments of prisoner and guard did not coincide. Sometimes a wooden cart creaked past, either very fast or very slow, according to whether it was drawn by the clumsy buffaloes or the swift-footed small horses of the country. Peasants on the way to their fields passed also,—usually the woman laden to the ears, and spinning as she went, while the man tramped behind her, leisurely puffing his pipe. It was the vintage season, and sometimes Vincenz was reminded of the fact by the monster bunches of purple and white grapes which were borne past his prison, strung upon wooden poles, and swinging heavily at each step of the bearers.

On the evening of the second day he began to wonder how long a man could stand this sort of life without committing suicide.

According to the commencement of the proceedings, there seemed to be no rational reason why this confinement, once begun, should not continue for months, if not years. This mournful thought was in his

mind when, on the morning of the third day, he stood peering through the iron bars. The dreary round of carts and laden peasant-women was beginning over again. An especially creaking cart and an especially laden woman had just passed, and Vincenz was on the point of turning from his grating, when another figure appeared on the scene and immediately arrested his attention.

It was that of a peasant-lad, and something in the cast of his clean-cut profile touched a chord of recognition in the lawyer's memory. Unspectacled as he was, he could not quite assure himself that he saw right; but surely that profile and that well-knit frame were familiar to him? Surely this was the peasant-lad Bujor whom he had more than once seen at the door of the Mohrs' apartment, perseveringly offering for sale young bears and unfledged vultures which nobody could be induced to buy!

Almost in the same moment the question was solved; for just as Bujor passed out of the little square of vision, another, and this time unmistakable figure, presented itself. If he might have hesitated as to the Roman profile, there was no possibility of doubt as to that wideawake and the well-cut tweed coat; and if at the sight of Bujor he had been conscious of a thrill of hope, Vincenz never doubted his rescue when in the second figure he recognised that obstinate Englishman—Mr Howard!

CHAPTER XL.—GRETCHEN'S FORTUNE.

"What more? thou know'st perchance what thing love is!"—MORRIS.

"Il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas."—BARÈNE.

Gretchen stood at the window and listened: the murmur of voices in the valley was swelling. The

crowd, heralded by some screaming children, came within sight, round the turn of the road. A

struggling mass of people was pressing round some central object of interest; but of what nature this object might be, Gretchen could not distinguish, however much she craned her neck and strained her eyes. It was not even easy to determine whether this disturbance was a manifestation of joy or of grief. Our sounds of woe and of rejoicing sometimes bear a curious resemblance to each other: these piercing shrieks might do as good duty for lamentation as for glee; this frantic gesticulation was as likely to mean despair as triumph. Nothing was evident, except unlimited excitement of some sort.

The small procession came on, always nearer and always growing with each step; waiters from the restaurant, *gamins* from the roadside, and peasants on their way home, joined it as it passed. The whole place seemed to have turned out for the occasion; those who were not in the street were at the window, — curtains were pushed aside and panes flung open. But there was one window which remained closed; there was one man, who watched the procession indeed, but who watched it furtively and with lowering brow, scowling as he held aside the velvet folds which barred his view.

As the crowd drew nearer, Gretchen also stepped back; an uneasy suspicion had stolen over her. The horrible idea had suddenly crossed her mind that this shrieking mob was a train of mourners, and that the object of interest in their centre could be nothing else but the body of Vincenz Komers, withdrawn from its deep grave in *Gaura Dracului*.

"The devils have given up their victim," she said to herself; and a cold sweat began to break on her brow. She would see his face

again — see it perhaps disfigured by some cruel mutilation. No, it could not be; she never could bear that sight.

She turned away and paced the room in feverish haste, her teeth clenched, her hands tightly clasped, for she was determined to fight down this fancy.

"Ah no," she said aloud, "the devils do not give up their victims; who dies in *Gaura Dracului* is buried there. This is nonsense; I shall go and ask what the noise is about;" and she moved resolutely towards the door.

Before she reached it, it sprang open, and Mr Howard stood before her.

"My dear," he began; but Gretchen had already started back, and pressed her hands over her eyes and ears. Her terror was too great for her; she wanted to see and hear nothing of the dreadful thing she feared.

"My dear child," said Mr Howard in his vigorous voice, which reached her in spite of herself. "Are you strong enough? Are you prepared?"

"Oh no!" cried Gretchen, shuddering. "Leave me, leave me; I am not strong enough,—I am not prepared—for anything more!"

"But do you know what it is?" asked Mr Howard in amazement.

"It is Dr Komers. Tell me quick—am I right?"

"You are right; but——"

"O God, I knew it!" She pressed her fingers more tightly across her eyes. "Oh, Mr Howard, don't make me look at him!"

"But I shall make you look at me," said Mr Howard, gently taking possession of her hands. "No, my dear; I see that you are not strong enough, that you are not prepared!"

Gretchen stared at him in

amazement; she had expected to see a face of grave concern, instead of which she found herself gazing into a pair of eyes which shone with a triumphant light.

The grasp with which he held her hands was painful almost in its vigour, yet Gretchen did not feel it. She was giddy and confused. The murmur of voices seemed to have got into the house, and she could hear Ascelinde's voice among them, and Kurt's. There was no mistaking it now; those were sounds of joy, not of lamentation. And Mr Howard was still holding her two hands, and there was still that light in his eyes. What did it mean? Her heart beat in uncontrollable haste. Hope was too dead within her to be called to life at a touch; she only felt a sudden incredulous, burning curiosity to know the true cause of that disturbance outside. She would have pushed past Mr Howard had he not held her back, and in the next moment they were all in the room.

They were all in the room. Ascelinde, Kurt, even Adalbert in his wheeled chair, and—yes, she was right, it was Dr Komers; but it was Dr Komers come back from the dead. His beard was somewhat unkempt, and he was pale and weary, and yet it was unmistakably Vincenz Komers. They all hung about him, all talking at once, shaking his hand, and laughing with delight. Only Gretchen made no movement towards him and gave no sign. The sudden transition from despair, not merely to hope, but to certainty, was more like agony than joy. A drowned man called back to life may by comparison pass through some of the inexplicable phases of suffering which Gretchen was now undergoing. She had no voice, and neither tears nor laugh-

ter. She could not grasp his hand as her father was doing, or hang upon his arm like Kurt. She could only stand and stare at him in blank silence. She could not tell him what she felt, for as yet she scarcely felt anything; she was not convinced yet whether this was real or not. In the midst of the tumult her silence was unnoticed by most, and in the tumult, also, it took some time before a clear understanding of this mysterious resurrection dawned upon any person's mind.

Mr Howard's statement was as follows: On that momentous evening of the lawyer's disappearance, after carefully searching every inch of ground, he had come upon a strange clue in the shape of a shattered pair of spectacles, which he immediately recognised as belonging to Dr Komers. The first impression which the shattered spectacles conveyed to him, and would have conveyed to most men, was of a struggle between Komers and Tolnay. It was not at all unlikely that Tolnay, in his then state of mind, should have picked a quarrel with his rival. But British instinct warned Mr Howard to keep the opinion to himself for the present; and by the time he found himself on the way homewards, and by dint of shifting the *pros* and *cons* of the situation, he ended by abandoning the idea of the struggle altogether. The position of the spot on which he had found the spectacles, led, on maturer consideration, to the belief that the lawyer had in reality never been very near the hole. A hope was now engendered in his mind; but, true to his principles, Mr Howard maintained silence on this point too. The chances were so nicely balanced for both possibilities, that he felt it would be unwise, if not unmerciful, to awaken in Gret-

chen's mind hopes which might prove futile.

Vincenz without his spectacles might much more likely have lost his way than Vincenz with his spectacles. Mr Howard knew that the Roumanian frontier was close at hand; he had been reminded only that evening that a wrong turn and half an hour's walk were all that was wanted to reach it, and he had not forgotten a word of what the Bohemian had said concerning the strict watch of that frontier.

It was a chance at least, and, with his innate pertinacity, Mr Howard followed up the chance. He started, carefully avoiding to take a passport with him, but having secured Bujor as a species of guide; and for two days he had travelled along the frontier, making inquiries at every village. His determination not to be baffled by the absurdity of Roumanian prejudice was strengthened by the recollection of Gretchen's despairing face, and the secret which had escaped her unawares.

By what means he had succeeded in intimidating the Roumanian officials of the place into delivering up the lawyer was never distinctly known—it was enough that he had succeeded; and Mr Howard, satisfied with the result of his expedition, had only one complaint to make, but that was a bitter one. On entering the country his fly-book, which held all his favourite salmon-flies, had been confiscated, as containing suspicious and possibly murderous implements, by which the safety of the great and glorious Roumanian nation might very likely be endangered. But even the fate of the salmon-flies lost a little of its weight at sight of the semi-tragical, semi-comical gratitude which had shone on the face of the rescued lawyer.

It took a few minutes to make

all this clear; and during all the time Gretchen stood apart silent and pale, feeling her benumbed power of sensation slowly waking back into life. It seemed to her a long time that the talking and laughing went on, but it was in reality only a few minutes.

She could not stand any longer; she sat down, and discovered, as she did so, that she was trembling from head to foot. The talking and laughing, the questioning and answering, the exclamations and cries, raged on for a time, then lessened and ceased. Adalbert, worn out with the excitement, was wheeled from the room; Ascelinde hastened off to order a repast for the famished captive; Kurt's emotions demanded a cigar in the open air; and Mr Howard declared that it was an ideal fishing evening, and that he meant to land a trout before sunset.

One by one they all dropped off; and Gretchen, raising her eyes, discovered that she and Vincenz Komers were alone in the room.

He turned towards her with his usual quiet, almost sad smile—that smile, the recollection of which had tortured her for three long days.

"Will you not tell me that you are glad to see me alive?" he asked, a little wistfully; "you have not said a word to me yet."

No, she had not said a word to him; she was the only one who had not welcomed him back. Even now she had not regained her power of speech. Her eyes were hanging upon him, scanning his features, as people look at long-lost treasures which they have thought never to see again. He was pale and weary-looking, she began to recognise now, as she met the gaze of those earnest brown eyes, which she had thought never to meet again on this side of the grave.

He was waiting for her to

speak, and she tried to speak. Her lips moved, but her voice seemed strangled in her throat. It was in a wretched starved little voice that she stammered at last—

“Yes, I am glad.”

The word struck upon her ear with a sense of almost ludicrous disproportion. Her feeling at the moment was, that if she were to pass the rest of her life on her knees thanking Providence for this blessing, it would be as nothing in comparison to her gratitude. Glad! That was a word which people used when they talked of a lapdog's fortunate escape, or of a pet canary-bird's recovery. How could she use it with regard to the happiness of her life?

Glad and sorry—those are the words we use; and *glad* was as little able to express what she felt now, as *sorry* would have failed to describe her feelings of the last terrible days. There was nothing in the word she used which could speak of that tremulous feeling of joy to which only now her stunned senses were beginning to awake.

Vincenz heard the little cold speech, and turned away with a sigh of disappointment. He had only hoped for some sign of friendly sympathy, nothing more.

But already Gretchen's senses were coming back to life. The sound of her own voice, and of that pitiable adjective she had used, seemed to show her all at once the astonishing depth of her happiness.

Very slowly she raised her heavy eyelids. There, close to her on the table, lay that half-finished letter, which need never be finished now. *There* she had been able to express what she felt, though now she was so powerless. Despair had given her words, but joy made her dumb. Should she destroy the paper? Yes, surely. Her confession was not wanted now.

Her fingers were upon the sheet; her breath was coming fast, and every moment that rush of tremulous joy was rising higher and growing clearer in her heart.

She took the paper, but she did not tear it up: hardly knowing what she did, with a sudden impulse she turned to Vincenz and placed the letter in his hand; then, walking to the open window, stood there waiting an eternity—an eternity of five minutes.

Dr Komers, in some surprise, had taken the paper and was reading it slowly. It took him a long time to read anything without his spectacles.

Gretchen, standing with her face to the open window, was blind to the mountain-range before her, and deaf to every sound in the valley. Her whole attention was concentrated upon that faint rustle of paper behind her. Even the loud voice of the rushing Djernis was for her drowned in the flutter of that paper. She did not regret what she had done, though she suffered acutely; she had been resolved not to spare herself. She did not dare to hope for that which she had forfeited; she asked for no more than his forgiveness. He should know that his great love had conquered her at last.

She heard him turn the first page, she heard him turn the second page, and then she hid her face in her hands. She knew what was written on that third page, and he was reading it now.

Then came two minutes of the most torturing suspense which Gretchen had known in her life. She heard nothing, till at last—at last she heard the sound of his voice.

“Gretchen!” he cried out, and, turning towards him, she saw his face as he stood with his arms stretched out towards her.

"Gretchen, is it to be?—is it to be after all?"

And now, at sight of the yearning love in his eyes, of the fire of happiness in his face—now Gretchen shrank back frightened at the thought of what she had done. She drooped her head, and stood before him trembling, while a scorching blush flowed upwards and stained the whiteness of her cheek.

He came towards her with that fire still in his eyes, and all at once the long strain gave way. Her happiness was too great to be calmly borne. In her weakness and her excitement she sank on her knees before him, weeping passionate tears, holding his hands and kissing them in a transport of ineffable joy, of gratitude, and of love.

And, after all, it was to be. After all her dreams of greatness, and in the very teeth of the *prix de logique*, this was the pass to which the ambitious, the mercenary, the calculating Gretchen had brought herself. She had tried conscientiously to stifle the poetry of her nature; she had striven to silence her impulsive yearnings, to chill the warmth of her generous young heart; and now she thanked heaven that she had striven in vain.

Perhaps she had never so thoroughly deceived others as she

had completely deceived herself. She certainly had not deceived Vincenz Komers. Had his lover's instinct not told him that she was other than what she painted herself, such a man could not have loved her so long. No two men are ever fascinated by the same woman for the self-same reason: the contrast between the poetical in her appearance, and the prosaic in her speeches, which had so fascinated István Tolnay, would have had no power over Vincenz Komers. It was just because he looked deeper, and discerned the unreality of this display of realism, that he loved her. It was just because she was so illogical with all her logic, so foolish with all her wisdom, so ignorant with all her learning, so weak with all her strength,—it was just because she was not that which she prided herself to be, that Vincenz loved her.

And his reward had come at last—his loyalty was crowned, his faith triumphant. Gretchen herself had defeated herself; for now of her own free will she had surrendered to that love which twice she had laughed to scorn.

This was the way in which Gretchen's fortune was made; this was the treasure which Gretchen found, if not in *Gaura Dracului*, yet certainly by means of *Gaura Dracului*.

CHAPTER XLI.—THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

"Doch mit des Geschickes Mächten
Ist kein ew'ger Bund zu flechten,
Und das Unglück schreitet schnell."

—SCHILLER.

Late that night, a solitary bear-hunter sat in the forest with his dog. He sat before a roaring fire. A tall tree-stem had been hollowed out, and flamed upwards, scattering sparks, and blackening slowly at the edges. This is a very different fire from that humble ember-pile

beside which Sancu and Duman had lain encamped; for István Tolnay is king of the valley and of the forest, and he can burn as many trees as it pleases him to destroy.

But there is not much expression of pleasure in the attitude of that man who sits silent and sul-

len on the forest moss. From the moment when he had stood behind his curtain, furtively watching the triumphant progress of the rival he thought to have slain, there had been no peace for him.

It was scarcely a relief to find that he was not a murderer. In spite of his blasphemous boasts to the contrary, he might not have been able to do the act over again; but he was capable of regretting that his attempt had been a failure. He had snatched up his long-unused gun, and, under a double impulse, he had plunged into the forest thickness. He could not bear to be witness of the happiness which he knew to be in store for his rival, and he felt that he must free himself from the desperate attempts of that other woman whom he had deceived and cast off.

She had come to his rooms again, she had again wept and upbraided him; there was no safety from her despair, except in flight.

"You told me to wait until *Gaura Dracului* was found," she had urged upon him with merciless tenacity. "I have waited, and *Gaura Dracului* is found.

As he sat there in brooding silence, with his gun cast idly beside him, he was not thinking of the game he had ostensibly come up here to hunt. He stared gloomily into the crackling fire, never lifting his chin from off his hand. Some morbid fascination had drawn him to-day away from his usual path, and towards this part of the forest which had been the centre of interest during these last days. He had thought he would like to see the place again; but being once up here, that wish had turned to a repugnance. Though he was but a few dozen steps from the spot, he had abandoned his intention, and had halted. Kindling a fire with the aid of the lad who accompanied

him, he had sat down here to rest and meditate.

The forest has not changed its aspect since that night, though autumn is creeping on slowly towards winter. Soon the forest will be bleak and colourless, its moss buried in winter snow, its trees bared to the lash of the bitter November winds. Then the solitude will be more sensible even than it is now, and the bear alone will stalk across the desolate scene, master of the wide forest around. The forest has seldom been so beautiful; for, with the colours of autumn, it has preserved the fullness of summer. Throughout all the autumn the weather has been so still and clear that scarcely a leaf has fallen; but this evening the boughs are rustling, very gently as yet, and now and then a coloured leaf flutters down, blazes up for a moment, red or yellow, in the firelight, and shrivels to ashes as it touches the burning tree.

Tolnay noticed nothing of his surroundings; he sat and stared, for how long he did not know—for hours perhaps—at the crackling flame which was leaping higher and crackling more loudly in the softly rising wind. Once a red spark flew towards him and alighted on the moss at his feet. Tolnay watched it absently, as it smouldered for a moment, struggled to live, almost succeeded, and then died out. The moss was very dry, he thought, as he stared back into the fire. He did not think of the spark or of the dry moss again, until presently Pasha growled beside him, and another figure showed itself within the range of firelight. The Bohemian had been at work cutting shingles in a farther part of the forest, and being on his way homewards, his attention had been attracted by the blazing tree.

His object in approaching the

fire was to offer a respectful warning.

"Herr Baron," he timidly began.

"Ha!" said Tolnay, with savage impatience.

"Herr Baron, I do not think such a fire is safe in such weather."

"Go to the devil!" said Tolnay, sullenly; "I have not asked your opinion."

"And the wind is rising, too. Listen!"

Tolnay raised his head for a moment. There was a distant moan of branches slowly swaying, a sort of melancholy whine coming from the depth of the forest; no doubt the wind was rising. He cast a glance at the tall burning stem; the sparks were flying faster than before.

"Leave me alone," he said, irritably; "I know what I am doing."

The tone and look intimidated the Bohemian, but by no means satisfied him. He shook his head in his gentle but obstinate manner, whispered something to the lad who had been nourishing the flame with pieces of dry stick which he threw into the hollow of the burning trunk, and then withdrew from the scene, though only to a little distance. He kept well out of the circle of light where that moody hunter sat, but he felt it his duty to watch over the burning tree.

István resumed his meditations. He had forgotten the warning almost as soon as it was uttered. Once only Pasha's uneasy moaning roused him for a minute. The dog was sitting upright, with ears erect, listening to the rising gale as though it had been the howl of a pack of hungry wolves. The Roumanian lad, too, was no longer feeding the fire, but sat on his heels, staring agape and aghast into the black forest.

"Look to the fire," said István.

"Why have you stopped throwing the sticks?"

"He told me not to," gasped the lad.

"Is he your master, or am I?"

"But the wind, *Domnu!*" (master).

"Do as you are told, young hound!" said István, savagely.

"The fire must blaze; throw the sticks, else I might be tempted to throw in your wretched carcass."

"*Domno ferestje!*" (so help God!) muttered the boy, hastily flinging in a handful of dry sticks, but turning pale as he saw the fresh blaze.

Again István sat plunged in sullen silence. He never noticed how by slow degrees that melancholy whine in the distance swelled into a howl; nor how beside him the stir of leaves grew to a rustle, and the rustle to a sharp continued rush.

It was after a long interval that the Bohemian stood beside him again, and urgently renewed his warning.

When István looked up this time, he saw that the leaves were no longer fluttering singly, but were showering down in dense masses, whirled from side to side by the rising wind. They had hung on the trees ready to fall at the first breath of air, and now each new gust which swept along stripped them off by hundreds and thousands. The branches groaned and creaked, and the wind whistled fiercer every instant, rising in strength with a fearful rapidity.

"Herr Baron," urged the Bohemian, desperately, "I implore you; it will soon be too late!"

It was too late already while he spoke, though István, roused at length from his reckless apathy, had started to his feet. The trees on each side had caught the flame, and were flaring up high. The fly-

ing sparks alighted on the ground, and the fire spread greedily along the dry moss.

Though the three men stamped upon the flames at their feet, and threw themselves on the ground in the hope of stifling them, it was no use; they broke out on the right just as they had been extinguished on the left. The fire flew along as though fed by a train of gunpowder. Within the space of five minutes, more than ten trees were burning; and whereas it had at first been a question of suppressing the fire, it had now become a problem of bare escape. The storm had risen to a hurricane; the wind no longer howled—it roared through the length and breadth of the forest. The trees comported themselves like frantic creatures. They writhed as if in agony: the lesser giants bent till they were doubled, like suppliants imploring for mercy; then springing upright, they seemed to rush at each other with threatening arms tossed on high.

They rocked and heaved and shrieked, flinging the flame to each other, and spitting out red sparks, which carried the destruction farther and ever farther. It seemed as though an army of demons had been let loose, and were playing their wild gambols with a fast and furious glee.

It would have been a glorious sight for any one who could have dared to watch it; and for some minutes Tolnay did stand, in forgetfulness of the danger, revelling in the destruction which suited his high-strung mood so well, looking at the leaping fire as though it had been a display of fireworks lit for his enjoyment. But the flames had all but reached him, and the other men were shouting to him that he must fly.

"Heilige Maria of the Wunder-

baum at Choteborschwitz!" the Bohemian called in his despair. "The forest is lost if there comes no rain!"

István turned to escape from the fire, but was pursued and surrounded by the fiery demons. To any one with a small amount of presence of mind, the danger would not even now have been imminent; but, whether from carelessness or from excitement, István had made a mistake in his direction—he had placed himself to the windward of the burning trees. His nerves were overstrained to-day, and believing his retreat cut off, his coolness of mind forsook him. Instead of forcing his way to the leeward of the fire, he attempted to escape in front of it. Deafened by the noise of the hurricane, blinded by the glare of the flame, and choked by the stifling curls of smoke, he pressed onwards. The air was thick with flying leaves, and hot with sparks which beat against his face.

It was scarcely possible to stand upright; he clutched on to the tree-stems as he passed for support; he tried to run, not knowing where he was going, nor where were the other men. His dog, leaping on him in his distress, bewildered him yet more with his terrified howls. He had lost sight of everything except that yellow glare, and he was flying from it for his very life.

Right through the midst of the hurricane the sound of a voice calling pierced to his ears for a moment. He could hear that it was a shout of distress, but he could not know that it was a warning cry which said—

"Not that way! not that way!"

All he saw was the dazzling glare; while the cry that might have saved him was drowned in the hiss of the wind and the crash of the falling trunks.

CHAPTER XLII.—THE MISSING KING.

"Masters, I have to tell a tale of woe,
A tale of folly and of wasted life."
—MORRIS.

A panic struck upon the Hercules Baths. Late at night the cry arose—

"The woods are burning!"

Though the fire was still far, yet from below in the valley the flying sparks could be seen, the unsteady glare against the sky, and the columns of black smoke rolling hither and thither as they were driven by the furious wind.

Every person who had turned out on the road, attempting to brave the hurricane for the sake of his curiosity, stared upwards at the night-sky, anxiously calculating what were the chances of rain. Rain was the only hope, as those who had before witnessed such forest-fires knew only too well. When the fire had reached such dimensions as this, it must rage, either until it was satisfied, or until the weather changed. The dry forests burnt like matchwood, and there was no reason why they should not burn for days and weeks, if rain did not fall. The Hercules Baths themselves were in danger. Some wild attempts were made to extinguish the raging element; every man with a pair of strong arms, and a spark of adventure within him, forced his way up the hills towards the place of destruction. But they might as well have stayed at home and saved their time and their breath; they were as helpless as children, in their attempts to check those leaping flames which sprang from crag to crag, and ran up and down the sides of each wooded ravine they reached in their triumphant progress.

With every hour the excitement

of the public mind grew. "Where is the Baron?" was murmured at first; and then it was cried aloud, "Where is the Baron?"

The panic-stricken people wanted a voice to reassure them—a recognised authority round which to rally; and they cried for the Baron. The extempore firemen rushed upon their operations without method and without leader—for the Baron was not there. Since the valley was in danger, why was the valley king not at his post?

Next morning broke, and again every one looked upwards at the sky. It was not blue, as the sky for so many days had been. Never had a grey sky been welcomed with such heartfelt gratitude as that one was to-day. There was rain in that sky, if it would only fall; but the wind hurried the drifting clouds across, and tore them to shreds in its fury. The black smoke had drawn nearer now—the very air smelt of it; but the sparks were not seen by daylight.

All day long the clouds hurried past, and the people stood and stared from the black smoke to the grey vault above.

Late in the afternoon a man, leading with him a dog, presented himself at the Mohrs' apartments. It was the Bohemian; he had come straight from the hills, from the place where the fire was raging, and the dog which he led with him was Pasha. All efforts to quench the fire had been abandoned, and all hopes were now placed in nothing but those grey clouds above.

The Bohemian's clothes were singed and torn, his hands were

blackened with soot; he was paler than he had ever been, and his blue eyes had a look of terror in them, as if they had gazed on some dreadful sight, which still pursued him in memory.

The Bohemian had a ghastly tale to tell; he shuddered and crossed himself as he told it, while the whining Pasha beside him uneasily scratched the floor.

"He stood like a man in a dream, staring at the flames. I shouted to him that it was time to fly; and then at last he turned and gazed wildly round him, and seeing the blaze on all sides, he must have lost his head, for he ran away from us instead of towards us—staggering like a drunkard. I tried to follow him; for at the moment that he turned, I remembered that straight the way he was running, there lay *Gaura Dracului*. I struggled after him with all my strength, and all the time I kept shouting, 'Not that way! not that way!' I am hoarse to-day with that shouting, but last night in the gale I scarcely heard my own voice. For a moment more I caught sight of him with his arms round a tree;

but the tree was burning already, and it fell with him. I heard the crash, and I saw him vanish. I knew then that I was too late, though I went on shouting in despair.

"I could not even reach the edge of the hole until this morning; for very soon it became the centre of the fire. To-day I was there. The tree which fell with him made a charred bridge across the place; the trunk was smouldering still, and its last sparks threw light down the black hole. His dog crouched beside the spot, and growled as I came near,—the poor beast's hair is singed off half its back. Of Baron Tolnay I saw nothing more."

The Bohemian had not yet finished his terrible story when there was a sound like a gentle tap on the window-pane. It was the first raindrop, and now the second followed, and the third, and the rain was coming down fast and thick.

The Hercules Baths were saved, and the panic was past.

The fire had cost thousands of trees, and one human life.

CHAPTER XLIII.—WHAT PEOPLE SAID.

"Was der rohe Aberglaube dem Teufel zur Last legt, das bürdet der halbe Philosoph dem Schicksal auf."—BENZEL-STERNAN.

The summer is over, and the monotonous rain pours down in torrents. The sky, which for so many weeks had been bright and distant, like the vault of a colossal dome, has darkened now, and lowered into the vault of a colossal dungeon; and with every hour it grows darker and sinks lower, as though with its weight it would grind the earth to powder.

Damp veils wrap the hill-tops away from sight: from morning to night the rolling mist floats in

and out of the gorge above the Cursalon, like the ghost of the dead summer, returned to haunt the scenes of its glory, and to weep over the retreats that once were its own.

Gaura Dracului lies once more solitary; but its mask is torn from it. Charred trunks are heaped around it; the fringe of creepers has been devoured by the flames. Retribution has fallen at last on the hypocritical flowerets that helped to hide this danger of the forest.

It will be long before *Gaura Draculi* can build up its screen again and weave its veil anew. The aspect of the place is metamorphosed. These surviving trees that stand now so still and dripping, can they be the same that comported themselves so frantically on the night of the fire? They stare down motionless upon the destruction at their feet; they are shedding tears of penance over their late outbreak of fury.

A very few guests still linger at the Hercules Baths. Mr Howard has gone back to his native country, a little softened towards foreigners in general—which fact he proved by nominally lending, but virtually giving to Kurt the money which is to satisfy Herr Mandelbaum.

"I always thought that young man would prove fatal to my purse," he confided to Lady Blanche Howard on the homeward journey. "I said so to myself on the very first occasion when he addressed me by the river-side."

But though softened towards foreigners in general, Mr Howard is implacable towards Roumanian officials in particular; he vows that he will get back his salmon-flies, even though he has to go as far as the English consul at Bucharest.

Of the guests who are still here, there is one who will not leave the Hercules Baths until he starts on the longest voyage of all. Adalbert will die at this place, which for so many years has lived as an ideal in his mind.

Hercules and his waters, for all their power, have been too weak to undo the harm of that Ash-Wednesday catastrophe. Once Adalbert, in the prime of his youth, standing at the foot of the beech-tree in the world above, had seemed to rival the forest-king in vigour and in life; and now they might

well rival each other in their ruin—for man and tree alike are broken.

Though Adalbert has not found health in the Hercules valley, Gretchen has found happiness there. Her father will die with his mind at rest, for he leaves his treasure safe in the hands of an honest man.

That which was a comfort to Adalbert was a blow to Ascelinde. For a second time she had to unbuild her ideal Draskócs—for a second time to root up the avenue, pull down the park-wall, and turn off the waters of her lake.

One other and heavier blow she had been spared. Vincenz had thought it more merciful not to mention to her, that in the course of winding up affairs at Draskócs, various papers he had come across had denoted with tolerable distinctness that that nine-pointed crown which had been the joy and pride of her life did not by any existing right belong to the name of Damianovics. It appeared that a great-grandfather's name having borne some resemblance in sound to the title in question, had become metamorphosed into Count, and adorned by a crown, which was in reality fictitious. In those lower Danubian provinces on the borders of Hungary, even a title can be appropriated with tolerable impunity. As long as it belongs to no one else, a bold or ingenious aspirant is more or less welcome to have it, even if it belongs as little to himself as to the others. There was nothing to be gained by telling the truth; so Vincenz kept his discovery to himself. He could see only heartless cruelty in taking from Ascelinde the last shadow of her grandeur. What indeed would remain of the poor Countess were she to be uncrowned?

Between Belita and Gretchen there is a coolness which will probably last for life. After all the counsels and pains bestowed upon what she called "the education of Gretchen's mind," her ingratitude was to be regarded as something far sharper than the serpent's tooth. "You have been an impostor," she wrote, "from beginning to end. The *prix de logique* should have been mine and not yours; but I suspected it all through, for I mistrust your nation. Farewell, Margherita! You meant well; but you are a German, and you could not escape that commonplace taint of sentimentality, against which my prophetic spirit so often has warned you."

With this one outburst of bitter reproaches the Countess's letters ceased; but after a time she softened so far as to send Gretchen a fashion-plate with the last "idea" for wedding-dresses, and since then the only form of correspondence between them has been an occasional 'Journal de Modes,' addressed in Belita's hand—"To save the poor child from becoming too hopelessly dowdy," as she explained to Ludovico. "Because she has married a man who wears antediluvian boots, it is no reason why she should look like a fright herself."

Tolnay's death was much commented on, and the opinions pronounced were as numerous as various.

The Bohemian said, with a sad shake of the head, that there is no escape from fate, and that when a man's day and hour have come, he must be content to die.

There were men who said that it had not been an accident at all,

but a suicide. Had it not been for the account of the Bohemian, as eye-witness, Gretchen herself might have believed this version; but though her self-confidence was shaken for ever—though she had learnt a bitter lesson—she was at least spared that remorse.

There were women who said that he must have been mad had he killed himself for the sake of that German girl with the golden hair and the large grey eyes; and there were others who said that, after all, her eyes were not so very large, nor her hair so very golden, and that he should have remembered that there are many other comely women in the world. "It is a pity," they said, "for he was a good-looking man!"

There was one woman who said that she would go up the mountains and fling herself after him. Princess Tryphosa meant what she said; but as the idea did not occur to her until she had returned to Bucharest, no one was alarmed by the threat.

The peasants of the valley alone took the catastrophe as the fulfilment of an inevitable doom. They bowed lower than ever as they passed the stone statue, and whispered to each other that the spirits of *Gaura Dracului* had received the sacrifice which once in every hundred years was due to them.

"It was sworn on the club of Hercules," they murmured in awe, "and therefore it was to be."

Gaura Dracului has indeed been found, but nothing has been found beyond the mere spot. The mountains have kept their secrets—perhaps they will keep them for ever!

BECKET.

LORD TENNYSON's third historical drama is decidedly his best. As of old its wont, the third wave has reached a higher line than the two which went before it. His *Henry II.* is a more thoroughly living man than his *Harold*; his *Rosamond* interests us more than his *Edith*; if he has not altogether succeeded with his hero's many-sided character, he has at least produced an ideal portrait of Becket which must be contemplated with pleasure. The situations in his new tragedy are much more striking, its catastrophe more dramatic, than those of '*Queen Mary*,' superior as that play is, in almost all respects, to its immediate successor. Few and feeble as they are compared with what they might have been, there are also in '*Becket*' more pathetic lines, more sayings worth remembering, more passages worth quoting, than in the two other dramas put together.

Yet to say this is, after all, to say but little, when we consider the vast superiority of the argument, which might well have enabled a genius inferior to Lord Tennyson's to rise to a very considerable height. Of the innumerable dramas sketched out for us in English history there is not a finer subject for a tragedy than the murder, with its causes, of the great Archbishop Thomas in his own cathedral, and there are few more touching among those presented to us by English legend than the tale of *Fair Rosamond*; therefore, while the poet who, not adequately treating either theme, has yet skilfully combined the two, and given a measure

of justice to each, must be held worthy of a prize, it is still a prize less magnificent and less lasting than those never-fading bays which the hand of Melpomene twines for her most favoured votaries.

The very combination of history and legend which has here given the dramatist such splendid opportunities has proved a snare to him. He has suffered his underplot to encroach too much on his main plot. The true tragedy, the friends severed by stress of circumstances, and set to fight out till death the battle between Church and State—each, in the judgment of a contemporary, zealous for God, yet each at times doing what his own conscience condemns—is not, indeed, ever lost sight of; but it is interfered with by the perpetual intrusion of *Rosamond Clifford*. Considering the darker blots on *Henry the Second's* life, we need not, indeed, blame the poet who has materially deepened his guilt in relation to her by prolonging their mysterious connection and its consequent deceptions many years after the true date of the unacknowledged wife's retirement to the safe shelter of a convent: it is only thus that he can make the Archbishop's murder the result of the Queen's wrath, braved by him in order to save *Rosamond's* life in this world, and the King's in order to save it eternally. But Becket's right conduct in that last and critical moment only makes his previous tolerance the more inexplicable: even harder to understand in a medieval Churchman than it is to explain how the very modern-looking plan of the retreat

at Woodstock, which Henry and his Prime Minister are first seen poring over, came into their hands. The King's earliest and latest confidences to him concern Rosamond; Rosamond's name is on Eleanor's lips alike in private and in public; Rosamond's bower, from the prologue to the conclusion, is the great attractive or repulsive force—the mark at which the Queen's coarse and base plots aim—the spot round which she prowls for long in an ineffectual way wholly inexplicable in so clever and so powerful a woman—the place, in a word, from which all the great interests of the kingdom, all other loves and hatreds, await the signal before they finally move. Lord Tennyson is as much bewitched by Rosamond as Henry himself, and her influence on his drama is not wholly beneficial. When he should have been depicting the anguish of a loyal heart forced to seem disloyal to his King through the paramount claims of loyalty to his God, his gaze is distracted by the sight of the fair Clifford fleeing the unwelcome pursuit of Fitzurse through the streets of London. When his utmost strength should have been put forth to enable Henry to not wholly forfeit the spectator's sympathies in spite of the ungrateful part

which circumstances allot to him throughout the drama, his attention is called off by warblings (not altogether melodious) in the forest of Woodstock, and by his heroine's sometimes childish, as well as childlike, talk.

This being so, it is the more remarkable that of the two great opportunities which his conception of Rosamond's character and story afforded, Lord Tennyson has deliberately passed over one. Rosamond's ignorance of her supposed husband's prior union with the heiress of Guienne is enlightened (fourteen years or so later than in actual fact) by a garrulous attendant. What follows? A scene between her and Henry, in which the outraged dignity of the high-born lady is kept in check by the tenderness of the woman? in which love for her child's father restrains the full expression of her sense of the wrong which that child has suffered? in which a broken heart is seen preparing to lay itself on a holier altar than the earthly one where its offering has been so vain? Or if not this, at least a soliloquy showing how love and duty strive in a noble breast? Neither the one nor the other—only two lines importing that little Geoffrey is to be henceforth his mother's sole comfort:—

“Nay, if I lost him, now
The folds have fallen from the mystery,
And left all naked, I were lost indeed;”

And her subsequent declaration to Eleanor—

“I am not so happy I could not die myself.”

Here, as in several other places, the painter has veiled Agamemnon's face, in despair of being able to portray its changing lineaments. For not here only—though here most conspicuously—we seem in reading ‘Becket’ to be reading a clever sketch of a play, but not the

completed work, and feel inclined to ask for the omitted and deeply important scenes. What we have is more or less good; but to bring us into full acquaintance with the persons represented we need much more, to make room for which many things here bestowed

on us might well have been swept away.

The second great opportunity has been used ; but how far well ? To what extent is the Queen Eleanor, who finds her way at last into the bower of Woodstock, armed with the traditional poison and dagger, the meet companion of the *Lady Macbeths* and *Clytemnestras* of the stage ? The poet's delineation of her throughout the rest of the play is true

to what history tells us of her. The child of the sunny South, the lover of the troubadour's strains, herself a poetess, grieved and amazed to find her once peerless beauty waning, and those charms which Christian and Saracen have alike found irresistible proving now powerless to retain her youthful husband's heart, the Eleanor of the Prologue's pretty song gives us the poetic aspect of her situation and character :—

“ Over ! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done ;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.
Over ! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close ;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.”

The prose which follows the song,—in those bitter words which show her heart to be an extinct volcano, and by those evil and foul designs which reveal into what black and writhing shapes the hot lava of her Courts of Love, of her unholy crusade, and of the manifold disgraces through which she dragged her royal robes at Paris, has petrified,—sets before us a repulsive picture, but a correct one, as far as it goes, of the divorced wife of Louis of France. True, years of sorrow are to purify this hopelessly bad woman, as she now seems, into something which in advanced age shall not be wholly unvenerable ; England shall bless as a regent her whom it scorned as a queen. But this lies in the far future. Her sons, Henry and Geoffrey,—concerning whom Eleanor is one day to pen to the Pope these pathetic words, “ The young King and the Count of Brittany sleep in the dust, while their most unhappy mother is constrained to live on, tormented irremediably by the memory of her dead,”—are as yet

children ; and the repentance which their sad fate is to work in her is far distant. Nevertheless its possibility should somehow have been foreshadowed ; as it is not either in the Prologue or in any of the other scenes in which Eleanor is an actress. But the more refined and diabolical the malice which the dramatist, without historical foundation, attributes to her against Rosamond, the less are his readers prepared for her entrance in the fourth act in the character which the old ballad assigns her. His Eleanor is herself unprepared for it. She has long sought her rival's secret retreat, she has armed herself with the fatal bowl and dagger ; but when she stands face to face with Rosamond she does not know what to do with them, and the reader feels instinctively that she is in a false position, in which the dramatist has placed a puppet rather than the real woman ; whose Southern refinement would have shrunk from shedding blood with her own hand—whose Provençal quick-wit-

tedness would have committed the deed to some trusty follower, to be sacrificed, if needful, to the King's anger in her own place. In short, Lord Tennyson has been too faithful to history, as far as Eleanor's main outline is concerned, to play it false with impunity. He has prepared no mighty lioness to rush with a leap and a roar on his defenceless lamb; and when the hybrid he turns loose upon it misses its spring, the spectator feels neither relieved nor disappointed. How much more life there is in Schiller's meeting of Queen Elizabeth with

Mary Stuart than in this meeting of Eleanor and Rosamond! There indeed they speak daggers, though they use none. But here Eleanor's dagger is a feint, and her tongue not sharp, though vile.

Rosamond's demeanour, on the other hand, is beautiful and natural—natural when, to save her life for her little son's sake, she kneels to the wicked Queen; noble as well as natural when, using her lately gained knowledge of that Queen's guilt, she appeals to heaven against her, while she rejects with horror the degrading terms on which she offers to spare her and her child:—

"I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.

Both of us shall die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars:
'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of England!
Murdered by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the East,
A hissing in the West!' Have we not heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle—nay,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's father—
Nay, even the accursed heathen Saladden—
Strike!
I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there."

Foiled by Becket's unexpected intervention, and restored quickly to her usual cool and sarcastic self, it is difficult to see why Eleanor's wrath should wax so hot against the man who has done her two most essential services—saved her from having to answer to the King for Rosamond's blood, and yet relieved her as effectually from her rival as death itself could have done, by taking the betrayed lady to Godstowe, there to hide that rival in the safe retreat of a cloister. So it is, however. With as sudden a change of character as that exhibited by the ornament given by her to Henry in the Prologue,—which, a crucifix when he

bestows it on Rosamond to assist her devotions, becomes once more a jewelled cross with its great central diamond when reclaimed by its former owner at Woodstock,—Eleanor forces her way into the presence of her suspicious and indignant spouse, holds up before him the tell-tale cross, and, at considerable personal risk, proclaims to him Rosamond's retirement to Godstowe, to which, she says, the Archbishop has constrained her; and so, making the already all but overflowing cup of his indignation run over, causes him to utter the fatal words, "Will no man free me from this pestilent priest?" The dramatist's not unhappy device of

closely linking Rosamond's fortunes with Becket's, and making the deliverance of the one in the spiritual, cause the death of the other in the temporal sphere, might have been executed with less violence to probability. Fitzurse,—a wretchedly contemptible being in the pages before us, who slinks after Eleanor's heels like a mongrel cur, and crouches before Becket like a beaten hound,—might have been allowed to avenge his own wrongs, and to show fidelity after his kind to his royal mistress, by telling for her the tale which would have exposed him to none of her risks in the telling. It is characteristic of the ideal criminal, thoroughly clever if thoroughly conscienceless, never to expend crime uselessly; and it is hard on a woman who is nothing if not clever, for Lord Tennyson to bring her for the last time before his audience while engaged in the perpetration of such a blunder.

If Queen Eleanor's figure is painted in the darkest colours, with too little to relieve them, that of St Thomas will seem to most beholders of this great historical picture as too uniformly bright, and requiring here and there a little shading. Lord Tennyson has not brought out into any strong relief the conflict in his case between the worldling and the

saint, between the habits learned in the court and those to be suddenly acquired in the cloister. "What work to make a saint of a fine lady!" is the scarcely just remark of one of the personages in Kingsley's 'St Elizabeth'; but "What work to make a saint out of a courtier!" must have been often Becket's own exclamation, as well as that of his new friends. It was only when the monks of Canterbury began to strip his corpse for burial, that they discovered "what a true monk" their somewhat distrusted Archbishop had been. But nevertheless a fine portrait of Becket's nobler self is given us here; and his rapid growth up to the medieval standard of holiness is well indicated. Some of his gains are certainly at the expense of his great antagonist; for it is little but the worse and baser side of Henry's character that we are allowed to behold. The champion of the Christian laity's rights is too unchristian himself to defend them with any hope of success against the, at first unwilling, but, when once enlisted, most faithful maintainer of the opposite cause. Yet Tennyson's hero could have held his own against a nobler Henry,—against the lost friend implied in such lines as these:—

"O Herbert, here
I gash myself asunder from the King,
Though leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief;
To show the scar for ever—his, a hate
Not ever to be healed."

Or again, as Becket sees how impossible it is to be the Church's

"O thou Great Seal of England,
Given me by my dear friend the King of England—
We long have wrought together, thou and I—
Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.
We are friends no more: he will say that, not I."

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
 Not yet the love : can I be under him
 As Chancellor ? as Archbishop over him ?
 Go therefore like a friend slighted by one
 That hath climbed up to nobler company.
 Not slighted—all but moaned for : thou must go.
 I have not dishonoured thee—I trust I have not ;
 Not mangled justice. May the hand that next
 Inherits thee be but as true to thee
 As mine hath been ! O, my dear friend, the King !
 O brother ! I may come to martyrdom.
 I am martyr in myself already."

It is as martyr that Thomas is principally painted here. The third act closes with his anticipations of martyrdom, as he is preparing to return from his exile in France to England after the King's hollow reconciliation with him :—

"The State will die, the Church can never die.
 The King's not like to die for that which dies :
 But I must die for that which never dies.
 It will be so—my visions in the Lord :
 It must be so, my friend ! the wolves of England
 Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep
 May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.
 Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice
 Is martyred mute, and this man disappears,
 That perfect trust may come again between us,
 And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice
 To find my stray sheep back within the fold."

In the fifth act, on the fatal Tuesday, after gently dismissing the disguised Rosamond, stolen from her nunnery to deprecate her late lord's excommunication, with the words—

"Daughter, my time is short, I shall not do it.
 And, were it longer—well—I should not do it,"

the tenderness for women and children, beast and bird, of the man "who withstood two kings to their faces for the honour of God," is beautifully sketched ; though readers who wish they had been spared some of the loathsome horrors of the beggars in the first act will regret here that a more poetic death than leprosy has not been found for the "little fair-haired Norman" love of Becket's childhood, who revisits his thoughts as—

"The drowning man, they say, remembers all
 The chances of his life, just ere he dies."

Lord Tennyson's version of the meeting of the King's four knights with the Archbishop is uniformly good. The gentleness of his pre- ceding talk with his trusted friend throws into stronger relief the courage with which he defies his assassins :—

"No !
 Though all the swords in England flashed above me
 Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—
 Though all the loud-lunged trumpets upon earth
 Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would stand
 Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
 Mailed in the perfect panoply of faith,
 First of the foremost of their files, who die
 For God, to people heaven in the great day
 When God makes up His jewels."

And it is every inch a medieval saint and archbishop who puts on mitre and pall, and with the words—

"I go to meet my King!"

moves forward calmly amidst the terrified monks to fall a Christian and a hero before St Benedict's altar in Canterbury Cathedral.

Rosamond's ineffectual interference—merely invented, as it should seem, that the curtain may fall on her form kneeling beside the great Archbishop's dead body, while his murderers fly from the storm which they have raised—may be defended on two grounds,—either as the suggestion of one flaw in so much strength, the too easy condonement of the King's light dealing with his marriage vow, visited in this world by a death, if glorious, yet violent and untimely; or on the one diametrically opposite, that Rosamond's presence is meant to remind the spectator that Archbishop Thomas died, not merely for the Church, but for God, a sacrifice to Eleanor's wrath, provoked by his zeal for the Sixth Commandment, to Henry's, incurred by his reverence for the Seventh.

But it is very questionable whether in this case the saying holds true, that "a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure." Where the actual fact is so grand as it is here, any tinsel additions to its pure gold seem impertinent; and had the irrepressible Rosamond been suffered to disappear from sight, though not from memory, like many a heroine of the Greek drama, before the catastrophe of

the play, its effect would have been the weightier and the more solemn.

There are but few historical plays which, however great their other merits, fulfil the idea of a perfect tragedy. This is as often the fault of the subject as of the dramatist. In several of Shakespeare's the climax occurs too early for the perfection of art; in others the catastrophe is not sufficiently affecting, or the hero not sufficiently interesting. Both in Schiller's "Wallenstein" and in Goethe's "Egmont" the central figure is scarcely great enough for his large surroundings. To turn wholly from the real to the ideal, and where the facts do not readily lend themselves to artistic treatment boldly to invent new ones, as Schiller did in his "Maid of Orleans," is to forfeit the character of a historical play—the profession of which is to present what actually occurred, although invested with ideal attributes, to the spectator—it is to evade instead of conquering the difficulty, and must have a displeasing effect upon the audience in proportion as the actual history so departed from is well known to them. When the historical dramatist is faithful to his vocation, he must often be so in spite of great temptations to a contrary course: often, not always; for, though even Shakespeare's genius could not make the end of his "Julius Cæsar" as interesting as its beginning, yet not even he could have more successfully arranged a complete tragedy, with a picturesque and affecting close, than those two bad people but good actors, Antony

and Cleopatra, left ready to his hand.

Why, with his power of divining character and his amazing dramatic tact, Shakespeare left the story of Henry the Second untouched—perfect tragedy as it is according to all rules of art—and devoted his gifts instead to depicting that of his worthless son John, seems an astonishing oversight. No one can wish it rectified at the expense of "King John"; for who could bear to be deprived of the pleadings of Arthur and the sorrows of Constance? But what a splendid opportunity our great poet threw away when he deliberately passed over the checkered fortunes of the first Plantagenet king! His doing so is probably accounted for by the difficulty of speaking the truth concerning Becket while the throne of England was occupied by a queen whose father had uncanonised the saint, as well as plundered and destroyed his shrine. But whatever the cause, our loss in this is one of which it is impossible to think without deep regret.

Should a satisfactory "King Henry the Second" ever be written—and it is an object for the noblest ambition of a rising poet—it will fall into two parts: the first with its scenes mainly laid in England, the second principally in France. Its first part will traverse the same ground as the play before us, and end, as it does, with the death of Becket. In it the note of apprehension of the evil doom that the witch-Countess of Anjou bequeathed to her descendants will be in some way early sounded, and Henry himself presented as one on whom the powers of ill who seek man's ruin have an especial claim. A powerful fascination, excusable in the case of one so young and inexperienced, will be

seen attracting him to the still beautiful Queen of France; while a not wholly selfish ambition prompts him to covet the vast dominions which are her dowry, as a means of delivering England from anarchy and wretchedness. In spite of Becket's warnings, the first downward step is taken; his good genius, Rosamond, is forsaken for his evil genius, Eleanor; and Becket's decisive choice between the two masters, whom he for a time tries to serve together, is made in some way in connection with the resolve to leave the lover who has betrayed her trust, and to pray for him henceforth in the pious seclusion of Godstowe, formed by Rosamond Clifford; whom our desired poet is to make as lovable as Tennyson has made her, but a firmer-minded and more dignified woman,—one mated with whom Henry would have found in the partner of his throne a constant ally of his better against his worst self, and whose prayers might have disarmed the unseen adversary, whose deadliest weapon is about to be pointed against his breast. In this great poem of the future, Henry is to be seen struggling with some honesty of purpose to discern between the Church and the clergy, Christ and the Pope; but blindly and ineffectually, since he has himself put out the light which should have guided him, by acting against his conscience.

"Hate born of Love and blind as he,"

grows up in his soul against his early friend Becket, in proportion to the degree that, through tampering with his own sense of right and wrong, he loses his power to believe in the other's conscientiousness. Perhaps in his anxiety he once presents himself at the wicket of Godstowe, and receives wise counsel from a penitent sister there; and

then allows himself to be scoffed out of it by his unscrupulous queen. At last, it may be, maddened by the discovery of Eleanor's infidelity to himself, and agonised at the same moment by the tidings of Rosamond's holy death, Henry, in a temporary fit of insanity, speaks the frenzied words which his knights rashly accept as a command, and the first part closes, much as the drama before us, with the martyrdom in Canterbury Cathedral.

Thus the destiny of the house of Anjou accomplishes itself as fearfully as does the fate of the house of Atreus, when Agamemnon falls by his own wife's hand. A crime more terrible than even hers, the murder of a father in God, lies at the King's door. The spectators feel that it cries for a greater punishment than that which befell the guilty Clytemnestra; and they await with awe and trembling the second part, in which it is to be expiated.

That second part will begin by exhibiting Henry's horror when he finds what he has almost unwittingly done. His penance at Canterbury will be a real expression of remorse, a sincere lamentation for the friend of his youth.

But the Furies who rise from the dark abyss as the avengers of parricide are not to be so appeased. They take possession of the minds of Henry's own sons, and set them in horrid, unnatural warfare against their own father. Then the wide dominions which the King's early ambition was content to pay so great a price for, prove the cause of perpetual conflict in his divided house. The wife whom he has wronged, and been wronged by, rouses his children against him. Victorious, but unhappy, he is summoned to the death-bed of his undutiful heir, and is persuaded

not to put himself into the hands of one who may only be feigning sickness in order to make his father his prisoner. The often-described scene of his anguish when he hears that his son has died, craving vainly his injured sire's forgiveness, will be most pathetic in our hoped-for poet's hands. So likewise will be that in which Henry extends to Bertrand de Born the pardon which the man who, as Dante says, cleft him and his son asunder, had so little right to expect; when the troubadour, who had boasted that his wits were so good that half of them would be enough to extricate him from any peril, asked by his stern captor to see whether either half or the whole can now avail him, replies, "Neither the whole nor the half is left me, O King; they all departed when your son died;" and, so saying, opens the fount of tears, and finds the hand so lately raised to slay him grasping his, in loving memory of the dead.

By what underplot the dramatist will, in some degree, relieve the gloom of these scenes, it is hard to say. The love of a daughter of Henry and Rosamond for Bertrand is a possible expedient; or that of Richard Cœur de Lion for some beautiful Provençal lady, who, from passionate hatred to the King, whom she deems the alien and heartless oppressor of her native land, stirs the son to revolt against his father. But the main theme of the play must be Henry's sufferings at the hands of his undutiful children,—the result and the punishment of his early contempt for the sanctities of married life.

At last the end comes. Two sons are dead; of the remaining two, one, in open arms against his father, has, with the help of the French king, constrained him to ac-

cept unfavourable terms of peace; the youngest and best loved is discovered to be secretly in league with his father's enemies. The name of Prince John, standing at the head of the list of rebellious vassals to be amnestied, breaks that father's heart, who turns his face to the wall after reading it, with a cry of uttermost distress.

Accompanied only, out of all his numerous children, by Rosamond's son Geoffrey, he retires to Chinon to die. Dark visions haunt the bed where he tosses in the delirium of fever. The unhappy spirits of his two dead sons seem writhing before him under the curse which he hoped he had retracted. The witch-Countess appears to his distempered vision, summoning her unhappy descendant into the gloom which is now her everlasting habitation. Geoffrey prays beside him, and earnestly invokes the intercession of St Thomas of Canterbury. The delirium changes its character. The King's face lights up with unexpected joy. "Rosamond," he exclaims, as though he saw an angel beckoning to him. Then, with recovered consciousness, he addresses "Geoffrey, my true son," and bids him have him carried to the adjoining church, and laid before

its high altar. There, round their dying sovereign, barons and men-at-arms, attendant priests and bishops, foremost among whom is the dutiful Geoffrey, stand silent and amazed as Henry's voice in broken accents falters forth a confession,—mostly inaudible, but of which an occasional half-sentence reaches the audience. It is addressed to no one of the clergy present, but to some one, unseen by the rest, evidently supposed by the King to be standing close beside him. The shades of evening are falling, and in unison with their dimness a deeper and deeper awe falls on the assemblage. Suddenly the complete silence of the last few moments is broken, as the latest beam of the setting sun pierces the clouds and falls full on the dying man, who, raising himself as if to meet it, with his eyes still fixed as before, says in a clear, distinct voice, "And now, my Lord Archbishop, your blessing." Audibly to all comes the answer, "Absolvo te. Proficiscere in pace, anima Christiana;" and, as the King sinks back, smiling in death, and all present fall on their knees, one of the older barons whispers to his neighbour, "It is the voice of Becket."

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART IV.

CHAPTER XII.—MR VENABLES'S FIRST COUP.

WHEN Mr Winstanley walked up-stairs, Mr Venables strolled off to the smoking-room. And as he sauntered along the passage, already he was meditating much over his good friend's autobiographical sketches, and the useful lessons that had been read to him. He thought quickly, and already had made up his mind that much was depending on some prompt course of action, and that he might make a great opportunity or miss it. "The old gentleman likes me; that is very clear,"—so ran his reflections; "and while his gratitude is warm, and we are living almost *en tête-à-tête*, he would very willingly do anything to help me. Once in London again, among his many distractions, to say the least of it, it is quite upon the cards that gratitude may cool into civility. But if I could only show him that I lay his teaching to heart, if I could make a *coup* on the spot and prove that I might possibly help him, then he would be likely to help me to some purpose, and I might be partner for life in the money-making firm of Winstanley & Venables. Thank heaven, I have that £10,000 to start with! But I am at Oban, and at the back of the world, worse luck, where I have every sort of facility for dreaming, but no chance of doing anything to the purpose." So the sanguine flashes of his ambition died down in momentary despondency, as his fingers were on the handle of the smoking-room door.

Now, as it chanced, the Dunolly Arms Hotel was a rather peculiarly conducted establishment. The season at Oban is brief at the

best, so that all the landlords are more or less autocratic. When families of tourists are scrambling for beds, in the fading sunsets of the long summer evenings, they will stoop to any servility to secure them. And necessarily the landlords, who are arbiters of their fates, abuse the advantages of their right of selection. But Mr M'Alpine of the Dunolly Arms was a despot among despots. A benevolent despot, it is true, with a kindly nature at bottom; but rough of manner and blunt in speech. Like Winstanley, he was an enthusiastic patron of the Fine Arts, and his public rooms and passages were hung with paintings and sketches, many of them of no inconsiderable merit, executed by artists he had entertained and befriended. He paid fair prices, when he did not take paintings in exchange for board and lodgings in the dead season; he sold these paintings again when he had the chance, and generally got back his money. He could afford to wait for it, as he could afford to lose it. Mr M'Alpine was a small wiry Celt, with a snarl at the corners of the lips, contradicted by a pair of kindly grey eyes, which seemed to say that his bark was worse than his bite. His domestic laws were like those of the Medes and Persians—especially that which forbade tobacco anywhere except in the regular smoking-room. No doubt he knew very well on which side his bread was buttered, and, being pecuniarily independent, could afford to persist in a system which remunerated him handsomely in the long-run. And if he showed the

wealthy Mr Winstanley a certain consideration, it was more from sympathy with him as a well-known *connoisseur* in the Arts, than from the idea that he might possibly become a purchaser of some of the masterpieces on the walls. Winstanley's valet had been blowing his master's trumpet: Jack Venables was always ready to talk with any one who either amused or instructed him; and M'Alpine was a well-informed man, with the local knowledge at his finger-ends. Jack had made great way in his good graces by showing him the pocket-book with the clever scratchings of the shipwreck. Old M'Alpine chuckled and criticised; he laughed especially at a portrait of Mr Winstanley in his ulster, sitting with turned-up trousers in the chair, amid the sea-wrack, the salt-water, and the limpets,—a clever study, which, by the way, the sketcher had never submitted to its subject: so that had not Jack been seemingly a gentleman of good estate, M'Alpine would assuredly have given him a commission.

And now Jack had passed the threshold of the door, and was peering through the haze of tobacco-smoke, fragrantly flavoured from beakers of steaming toddy, when the well-known accents of the host welcomed him out of the mist.

"Step this way, Mr Venables; here's a chair for you, sir." And with unheard-of condescension, at which a knot of cronies opened their eyes, M'Alpine rose from the depths of an American rocking-chair and pushed it towards the new-comer. Jack thanked him, protested and accepted, with an easy grace, which brought M'Alpine's allies metaphorically to his feet, and perhaps, in a measure, impressed the great man himself.

For though nothing could be pleasanter than Mr Venables's manner, somehow he had the knack of keeping his inferiors at arm's length, while treating them with encouraging familiarity; and while swearing he was the best fellow in the world, they would hardly have cared to take a liberty with him.

Jack called for refreshment, and handed round his cigar-case. "Don't let me interrupt you," he said, lying back easily in his chair; and one of the party, who had been primed with sundry tumblers, took him at his word, and continued the conversation.

Jack sat listening abstractedly, when suddenly he pricked his ears. A burly townsman was discoursing about sundry land lots, which he asserted to be going for a song, in the outskirts of the thriving watering-place.

"I wonder now that you don't make a bid for them yourself, Mister M'Alpine. The town is bound to grow; and ye ken well that before now, Dunclaverty has been getting £40—ay, £50—for his feus to the wast. I believe that these would fetch as much, were you to bide your time: anyway, if ye got but half the money, ye'd turn a pretty penny on them. It's the truth; and, Mr Baxter, I appeal to you now, sir?" addressing himself to the gentleman next him.

Mr Baxter muttered something that might pass for an assent; and even M'Alpine, who was often contradictory from sheer "cussedness," as the Americans say, did not seriously dispute the proposition. He contented himself with grumbling that he had more ground already than he well knew what to do with; and that when a man meant to add a wing, and maybe a stable-yard, to his hotel, it behoved him to see to the balance at his bankers. And so it chanced

that the conversation was changed when Mr Venables had asked some casual questions, apparently more out of politeness than for any better reason.

As a rule, he took things easily in the mornings; but next day he was up and about betimes. Finding M'Alpine admiring his flowerbeds, Jack praised the carnations and picotees, and offered him some rare cuttings from Sussex. Then, easily passing from flowers to shrubs and scenery and land lots, he resumed the talk of the night before to more practical purpose. Subsequently he extended his stroll along the beach, and surveyed certain sunny stretches of the shore, with an eye to house sites and ornamental gardening. He came back with an appetite, and fortified himself with an excellent breakfast. Still indefatigable, he went out again; and was closeted for a couple of hours with a lawyer and bank-agent, who, although he set a very sufficient value on his time, after dragging out title-deeds and plans from sundry tin boxes, insisted on escorting his visitor to the outer door of his office. And a little later, Mr Venables, with the *déagé* air that sat so naturally on him, strolled into the private sitting-room, in which the companion of his travels was dawdling over a late French breakfast. After a few observations of course, he went straight to his point.

"And now, sir, if it won't interfere with your digestion, I have come to you for a piece of advice. The fact is, I am thinking of transacting a bit of business, and no one can counsel me better than you."

"Spoil my digestion! Quite the contrary. There is something refreshing in the sound of business, when weeks of idleness are ending in *ennui*—or would have ended in *ennui*, at least, had it not been for

your charity and good company. Really, you excite my curiosity besides. What business can you possibly have to transact in this place? For when you were kind enough to tell me all about your affairs the other day, I thought we agreed that the investment of that money of yours was to stand over for our future consideration."

Jack liked the sound of the "our"; it was pleasantly suggestive of the speculative partnership he was contemplating.

"So we did, sir, and so I had intended. But chances will turn up, as you know, in strange places; and something suggested itself last night, which I have been inquiring into this morning."

Then he told his tale, and produced the memorable pocket-book. There were some figures in pencil on one of the pages, which Winstanley examined with considerable interest, and which were the summing-up of the case that Jack submitted.

"It looks well on paper, I must confess," said Winstanley. "But of course all depends on prospective value; and you are looking up your money, remember that. But 'always distrust a vendor' is a golden rule. Why does this Mr Campbell, your lawyer's principal, wish to sell? He should know the worth of his prospects as well as anybody."

"It is not he, it is his creditors. They are getting impatient for their money, and decline to wait any longer. And M'Alpine and the other men last night, who never dreamed of me as a possible purchaser, agreed that there was no one on the spot with cash ready to pay down. If things are as straightforward as they seem, it appears to me that I can lose nothing, and may make a good deal. I should borrow a part of the purchase-

money on mortgage, and merely pay down the difference. My lawyer friend undertook to have all that arranged for me. And then I see no sort of reason why I should not develop the property at once on a considerable scale. They are shrewd enough here, but scarcely speculative. Why not launch an Esplanade and Hydro-pathic Company?—with a palace crowning that promontory there, and standing in its terraced gardens. You know something of the views from the windows, and how one might make them tell in the prospectus. The landlocked bay, with the shipping riding at anchor; the rugged cliffs of Kerrera; the emerald verdure of Lismore; the giant mountains of Glen Etive and the Land of Lorne looking down on the lochs that lie sleeping in their shadows,—I see it all, sir; don't you?"

"Hum! perhaps!" ejaculated Winstanley, doubtfully. But it struck Mr Jack that he objected for form's sake, and that he was inclined to listen to the voice of the charmer.

"Getting out a good Company, and arranging the preliminary terms so as to make certain of a fair profit on the launch, is confidently delicate work, my young friend. You may believe a man who has had some experience of Company-making."

"No doubt, sir. But that is just where a few hints from your experience would be invaluable, and I don't think you will grudge me them."

"But, my good friend, you don't think of doing all that sort of thing yourself,—with your £10,000, and—excuse me—with your inexperience?"

"I have hardly had time to think about it as yet; and if I decide that I am hardly likely to

be out of pocket in any case, the first thing to be done is to secure the property. I have my reasons for risking something. After all, if I lose, I am no worse off than I was a few weeks ago; if I win, why—not but what I shall count the chances carefully. I believe, for example, that if I saw my way, my uncle Moray, who is rich, would be ready and willing to stand by me. I was loath to apply to him *in forma pauperis*, but I should be glad to ask his support in a promising speculation. Nor do I despair of enlisting our worthy landlord; and let me tell you, that M'Alpine would be a veritable tower of strength in Oban here, where his foot is on his native heath. As for you, sir, you have already promised me your advice; so you see that the betting may possibly be in my favour."

Winstanley drummed reflectively on the table with his fingers; then he got up and walked to the window, which commanded a view of those picturesque slopes in which Jack Venables proposed to sink his capital.

"It is certainly a magnificent landscape," he observed, reflectively; "and the air and the ozone, and all that, ought to be of prime quality."

Jack, for his part, was musing aloud. "I can't conceive why that angle of the estate to the back of the railway station has not been bought long before now by the Company. They *must* want it sooner or later. It is the very place for a wharf over the deepwater, with rails laid down for landing sheep and cattle. I should never sell it outright for a penny under £4000."

In a moment or two Winstanley turned round abruptly.

"Do you think that lawyer acquaintance of yours will be at home?"

"Sure to be, sir, I should say. He dines at two—so he informed me; and now it is barely one."

"Then, if you don't mind, and as you have done me the honour of consulting me, we will walk along and have another interview. There are one or two points which, for your sake, I should be glad to have cleared up."

The lawyer never dined at two that day. He was persuaded to join the English gentlemen in their private sitting-room at 7.30, at the Dunolly Arms. When he had gone, his gracious host seemed somewhat embarrassed and preoccupied. So much so, that Mr Venables, feeling puzzled and ill at ease, proposed to say good night, and go down to the smoking-room. But when he rose and held out his hand, Winstanley motioned him back to his seat. He was graver than was his wont, yet there was no mistaking the kindness of his manner. As for Jack, his heart beat quicker than usual: he felt there was something serious to be mooted.

Winstanley hummed and hesitated; then he spoke abruptly, like a man ashamed of his hesitation, and resolved, at some risk of misconstruction, to put matters on a straightforward footing.

"You know I like you, Venables; you know I am indebted to you for a great service; and you know that I fully intended to help you. And I believe you like me quite well enough to be willing to accept any service I could offer you. But, to own the truth, you have been rather too quick for me. You've forced my hand in a manner. As for this scheme of yours—to be candid—I think it both a wise and a foolish one. There's money to be made, almost to a certainty—by a man who had money to spare and could afford to watch his opportunities. Indeed I am so

far convinced of that, that I mean to make you a proposal. But on the other hand, speculation is speculation; and those pretty ideas of yours are intensely speculative, for a fellow with a mere trifle of capital. No man in your position can promote companies profitably—to his own advantage, that is to say—for the pikes will swallow the minnows. And at best, it would be absolute folly in the circumstances putting all your eggs into this one basket. Now I daresay that, in the brilliancy of your speculative genius, you think you are carrying your eggs to a golden market, and might distrust any one who volunteered to share the venture."

Jack made a gesture of eloquent negation.

"Oh yes—you may protest; but whatever may be your opinion now, be sure that your second thoughts would be suspicious. I have more than hinted my fears of misconstruction, and now I shall speak out what is in my mind. You have had a happy thought about those Oban land lots, and I should be sorry to see them slip through your fingers. I am far from saying that with money sufficient and with patience, those dreams of yours may not be realised. But believe me, that I think I am doing you a real service, instead of robbing you of legitimate gains, when I frankly offer to share the venture. Take what proportion you will, and leave me the remainder. I may add," and here Winstanley threw significance into the words, "that you shall be no loser by accepting my offer."

Knowing, as we do know, Jack's sanguine temperament and secret mind, I need scarcely say that when his elderly friend had finished the formal speech, he scarcely

knew whether he was sitting in a chair or balancing himself on the back. In the course of twenty-four hours his suddenly inspired *coup* had succeeded beyond his utmost hopes. Come what might of this Oban affair—and he firmly believed in it—the solidarity of Winstanley & Venables had become a reality. He fancied he might carry those sprats of his to a good market in Oban; but in any case, with ordinary good-fortune, his future was assured. He saw a career of successful speculation before him: he might propose to his cousin Grace when next he met her; and if it were arranged that they must wait for a year or two, why, he was content to be patient. Now that marriage seemed well within his reach, he was persuaded that he was deeply in love with his cousin; but then, when doubts and fears are changing into certainties, there is delight in dallying with coming felicity. As for Leslie's rivalry, time might have worked in favour of that gentleman; but promptitude on his own part would nip any of the hopes that Leslie could scarcely have begun to cherish. So thinking, he gradually composed himself; and then, by a natural association of ideas, he remembered Moray's offers of introductions in China.

Naturally, in his mood of confidence, he reminded Winstanley of them. Now Winstanley, like Jack, was essentially a man of impulse, and of single ideas on which he would concentrate for the time the full flashes of his intelligence. He was thinking of indulging the

luxury of gratitude, and forwarding the views of this young man, who would be a creditable and profitable *protégé*. He dreamed of playing the game of ambition at second-hand in his decline, and using both political and financial influence in Venables's favour. So, as was sometimes a habit of his, he thought aloud, and said—

"My dear boy, your going out to the East would be a mistake. You will do a great deal better at home, to say nothing of living in place of existing."

Before the words were well out of his lips, Jack Venables had thanked him with unfeigned gratitude; and grasping his hand with a pressure that clenched the alliance, had effected his escape into the open air. And although Jack had acted for once without the slightest *arrière-pensée*, he could scarcely have played his cards better. He wanted to be alone and to think; to revel in the prospects brightening before him; to walk himself off his legs in the sea-air, and relieve the lungs that seemed to be overcharged. While Winstanley, left to his solitary reflections, realised the responsibility he had accepted. In stepping between this lad and his wealthy uncle—in setting down his foot on a scheme which promised ultimate wealth—he had virtually charged himself with the care of his future. So that, after all, it was well he could say to himself in sincerity that he by no means regretted what he had done, although somewhat ashamed of having so hastily committed himself beyond honourable retraction.

CHAPTER XIII.—MORAY GOES INTO THE CONFESSIONAL.

Leaving Winstanley and his young companion to continue their journey to the south, where we

shall meet them again ere many months are over, we return to the inmates of Glenconan. Moray had

made all the arrangements for the round of visits of which he had spoken to his nephew; and it must be confessed that Grace was looking forward to them with pleasure. She might be "a perfect woman nobly planned," as Leslie thought, and had once ventured to tell her. But she was not a bit "too good for human nature's daily food," and he was very glad to think so. She knew very well she was attractive, and she loved to make herself agreeable. Though no coquette, she did not disdain conquests—what girl who is worth her salt ever did? As yet she had really seen nothing of society, and she was willing enough to make preparations for the coming campaign. Her cousin Jack, though no ascetic in a general way, would probably have disapproved her correspondence with Madame Antoinette of Bond Street, and cut down the orders for costumes. The dazzling visions his artistic imagination would have conjured up, of virgin beauty in billowy white, like a purer Cytherean Venus rising from the sea-foam, were not to be for him. As for Leslie, who never gave his confidence by halves, characteristically he trusted the sweet refinement of her taste, and was pleased with anything that gave her pleasure. Were she ever to be his wife—and perhaps Grace felt that in such trifles more than in graver things—he would assuredly be at once the most trustful and generous of husbands. Not that as yet there was anything in the least serious between them: but a girl like Grace, of course, will have her dreams—especially in such solitudes as those of Glenconan; and when her fancy peopled some future home, now she might occasionally think of Leslie as its master.

Grace's interest in her toilets

was very natural, and Leslie looked on and listened benevolently when she was reading notes written to London aloud to her father; nay, he even volunteered suggestions as to garnitures and trimmings, which were generally more poetical than practical. But Moray's behaviour puzzled him: it seemed so strangely inconsistent. He knew his uncle to be one of the most liberal of men; it was certain that he doated on his only daughter. He had given her *carte blanche* to send for what she pleased—for, like Leslie, he had confidence in her taste and discretion; and yet it appeared to the young man that he sometimes actually grudged her things. It was a metaphysical problem that Leslie was curious to solve, for he did not like to feel anything but respect for his uncle; and had Venables been there to talk with, he might have enlisted his shrewdness in attempting to come to a satisfactory conclusion.

"My uncle," he said to himself, "is a man of sense and firmness; and if he wished his daughter to be extremely simply dressed, he would say so frankly. But I am sure there is nothing of that in his mind; and indeed, if it were left to him, with his gorgeous oriental reminiscences, I believe he would be inclined to over-dress her. I remember how, much against her will, he made her come down one evening in cashmeres, and sparkling in his mother's diamonds. He is proud of her looks, as he well may be, and proud of her position as the heiress of Glenconan. That he is willing, with it all, to let her marry modestly, I can understand, for he seeks to assure her happiness before all things. And as he likes to see her happy, he tries hard to seem pleased when she is laughingly

making much ado over one of those letters to the dressmakers. Could she see the cloud that overcasts his face the next moment, my word for it, that letter would never be sent. For once in their lives the two misunderstood each other; and I should be glad to get at the bottom of the mystery."

Had it been Jack Venables, he would have marked and inwardly observed, without letting his uncle suspect anything. But Leslie was more deeply absorbed where he was interested: he gave far less thought to appearances; and more than once his uncle caught his steady and inquisitive gaze, while Leslie's obvious embarrassment, with an awkward habit of colouring up, emphasised the scrutiny somewhat unpleasantly. Moray, as we know, was frank to a fault, and, moreover, on the most friendly terms with his nephew, and he justly appreciated his judgment and character. Besides, he longed for a confidant; and being eager to relieve his mind, was screwed up to the explanatory point by his nephew's approaching departure. So it came about that one evening when Grace had gone to bed, he broached his subject and dashed into the middle of things. He laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, and looked wistfully into his kindly eyes as if seeking for the sympathy he was sure to find.

"I have been occupying you a good deal lately, Master Ralph, and you are beginning to think you may have been mistaken in me."

"Not that, sir, believe me. But since you ask me, I may own that I see there is a mystery; and I should be very glad to have it cleared away, for many reasons, and as much for my cousin's sake as my own."

"That is the very reason why I have spoken. Cleared away the

mystery shall be, and I have been longing to make a clean breast of it. Grace is more deeply concerned than myself; and I have sometimes thought she would be my safest counsellor. But then, as yet she knows nothing of the world; and the more innocent a woman is, the more certainly she will be swayed by the spirit of self-sacrifice and an over-sensitive generosity. Now you, although you are young, are enough of a man of the world to understand me; and you have been living long enough under my roof to make me recognise you for the soul of honour."

Leslie merely bowed. He was too much interested to interrupt; and after all, his conscience told him that his uncle only did him justice.

"To say the honest truth, if I have hesitated so long, it is because I feared you would pronounce in favour of my scruples; and then there would be a change in our circumstances—in Grace's future."

He paused, as if expecting Leslie to speak. But Leslie, all in the dark, did not know what to think. What he did say was, "I presume you mean that your fortune is somehow compromised; but I fancied it had all been satisfactorily invested."

"So far as I know, my fortune is safe enough; certainly it is large enough. The most speculative of the investments are in sound bank-stocks. No; I may call myself a wealthy man, and that is precisely the cause of my trouble. You stare, as well you may; and yet I assure you I am to be pitied. There has been a cloud cast over my cheerfulness ever since I came back from the East, with money enough to clear Glenconan and leave my girl a wealthy heiress. Do you remember that

drive of ours from the railway station to the house, when you and Venables came north with me? I don't know whether you chanced to remark anything, but he was quick enough to suspect. I have seldom looked forward to anything more than to that return to my family home, with the feeling that I had retrieved the family fortunes. It was like leaving the fevers of the jungles for the fresh air of the Highland hills; it was the beginning of a new life among the grouse and the deer, in the wild picturesqueness of my native glens. Yet a skeleton was sitting in the carriage, by way of bodkin between you and me: in the very moment of triumphant exhilaration, I seemed to hear the rattle of the bones. Talk of skeletons in cupboards: I suppose you may lock them away and forget them for a time. But as for mine, it has always been with me, more or less, of late; and as the hope that it would cease to haunt me dies away, I begin to think that something must be done to get rid of it."

Leslie was fairly taken aback: he sat in his chair, silent and expectant. He had made sure that his uncle had a trouble, but he had suspected nothing so serious as this. In the man who seemed moved from all his habitual self-restraint, and nerving himself to lay bare his innermost secrets, he scarcely recognised the cheery and well-preserved old Highlander, whose spirits should have been as equable as his digestion was sound. Surely his uncle must be the prey to some mad hallucination; for it was impossible to believe he had reason to be the victim of remorse. But whether it were really remorse or a hallucination was the question he was presently to be asked to decide.

There is no need to go into all the details of Moray's disclosures. Infinite worry as his mental anxieties had caused him, it was but a question of conscience or of casuistry, after all, and it lay in a nutshell. The first of the revelations that surprised Leslie was, that the imperturbable composure of manner, which seemed to match so well with a constitution of iron, masked a temperament almost morbidly sensitive. Making a plunge into the confessional, Moray had opened the conversation abruptly.

"I said, a moment ago, that I considered you the soul of honour: frankly, and without compliments, what should you have said of me?"

"Why, surely, sir, the question is strangely unnecessary. I would stake my life and my own honour upon yours."

"I thought as much; and I do not say you are wrong. For many a long year I have never knowingly been guilty of an act with which I can reproach myself; and if I knew I had unwittingly injured any man, I would willingly make him restitution fourfold."

"I am persuaded of it, sir,—and so much so, that if you will forgive my impatience, I entreat of you to come to the point."

For Leslie, thinking of Grace, knew not what to imagine, and was inclined to fear the worst. He might be a fool, but was it possible that the life of his placid uncle could hide one of those terrible secrets or scandalous hypocrisies which one reads of in sensational novels, or in more sensational criminal trials? He must be a fool, and such a supposition was out of the question; but in that case his uncle was the victim of morbid insanity—and if so, it was scarcely better for Grace.

But Moray, speaking faster than

was his habit, proceeded speedily to set his nephew's mind at ease.

The long and the short of the story was, that his conscience pricked him as to the beginnings of his fortune. And as the constant dropping of water will wear away a stone, so with that perpetual pricking his conscience had become ulcerated.

"I was young and poor when I went out to the East,—young and poor, adventurous and thoughtless. That is to say, I thought enough, when it was a question of devising and carrying out some hazardous but lucrative combination. But I thought of the end and of the means to it, and not of their manner or their morality. There is much to be said in extenuation, I know; but extenuation at best infers culpability. The tone of mercantile society was free and easy in the Chinese seaports; in the Straits Settlements, and in the Malay territories, the morality of the European traders was still more lax. I did nothing that was not heartily approved by the representatives of our leading houses in China; my best strokes of business were suggested by men whose names have always stood above reproach. One success led on to another, and I was flattered by the praise bestowed on my lucky ventures. Gradually I shook myself loose from more questionable schemes, and launched out in strictly legitimate trade. But I can never forget that the best of my early hits were flagrant breaches of the Chinese revenue laws,—that I followed them up by certain trading transactions with Malay rajahs, which I scarcely think now would bear close investigation. I was no worse than anybody else; indeed I may say I was much better than many, for I had always my code of honour—and although it might be

elastic, I strictly obeyed it. No, I can never reproach myself with knowingly acting dishonourably. But all the same, as I see things now, I doubt if I ought to have made the *coups* which began to enrich me. And now, Ralph, what do you say of it all?"

I have condensed a prolix explanation into a few brief sentences. Leslie could not help admiring the frankness with which his uncle made what was evidently a most trying confession. Yet it pained him to see the resolute man, who was in the habit of expressing opinions briefly and decidedly, as if they scarcely admitted a rejoinder, pleading hard for the lenient judgment which might salve his conscience and reconcile him to himself. He was touched when Moray added, very unnecessarily, "Of course you will not breathe a whisper of this to Grace." He would have given much to have been able to speak offhand with such obvious conviction that his answer must have carried immediate comfort; but he could not collect himself sufficiently for that, and indeed he hardly knew what to say. The soul of honour, as his uncle had said, he had not lived in the Anglo-Chinese colonies five-and-twenty years before, nor could he put himself in so unfamiliar a position at a moment's notice. For himself, he would have been sorry to have made his money by running opium, or by stretching points with semi-barbarians, even though those enterprises had left him with a fortune which would have entitled him to ask for his cousin straightway. Yet, on the other hand, he was so anxious to soothe his uncle's susceptibilities, that in giving an answer he rather compromised with his conscience. As happens generally when we weakly steer a middle course, the trimming

was unsatisfactory to both. Ralph said, somewhat hesitatingly, that as Moray had always acted for the best, he ought not to reproach himself with any peccadilloes he had committed; that the invariable and unimpeachable purity of his subsequent conduct should be a guarantee for his having acted with honourable intentions. Moray listened sadly, and shook his head. The answer did not give him the comfort he had hoped, and his excessive sensitiveness read between the lines, imagining more than was passing in his nephew's mind, and ignoring the difficulties that beset this young Daniel, called so suddenly to judgment. Naturally they talked on, going over and over the same ground,—till Leslie was really converted or persuaded into saying much that Moray would have had him say at the first. At least he warmed up so far as to declare that he thought his senior's scruples were rather fantastic; that, at all events, he could hardly make restitution to the Government or the rajahs he fancied he might have wronged; and that he might set his mind at ease if he made a good use of his money.

"Ay, there it is!" said Moray. "It has often occurred to me that I might anticipate my death, and give away the bulk of my wealth in charity, or for philanthropical objects; though, having worked hard and cleared Glenconan, I confess I should like Grace to have that—and I think she honestly might in any case. But what merit would there be in so far impoverishing myself? If anybody were to suffer, it would be Grace, who would suffer vicariously. As for me, give me a quiet life here in the Highlands, and I should ask nothing better. But this is where the shoe pinches. If the money were fairly made, it is

Grace's as much as mine; and if I part with it, I am easing my conscience at her expense,—which, as you must admit, would be both unmanly and dishonest. On the other hand, if I have really enriched myself by faults—not to say frauds—I ought to make restitution somehow and *colte que colte*."

"Precisely so," said Leslie; "but you have repeatedly used the word 'restitution,' and it appears to me to help us out of the dilemma. Supposing—I say, that supposing you are right in reproaching yourself, nevertheless you cannot restore your gains to the rightful claimants. I cannot imagine any conceivable way in which you could rationally set about it. It follows, then, that you must keep your money, turn it to useful purposes while you live, and leave it behind you with a clear conscience to a child who is sure to follow in your footsteps."

"And that piece of advice," he thought, as he gave it, "is thoroughly disinterested; for it leaves obstacles in my way that might otherwise be removed. If Grace were to be poor, or only moderately rich, I think I should venture to try my fortunes with her on the moment."

Nor did Moray appear to be much better satisfied.

"I have a foreboding all the same," he remarked, dejectedly, "that if I do as you suggest, or, in other words, do nothing, the matter will be taken out of my hands, and the difficulty before long will settle itself. And for myself, I cannot say I should be sorry. I think that all my investments are safe and solid; yet, mark my words, you will see that money slip through my fingers." Then, as if ashamed of himself and his superstition, he tried to

give the conversation a brighter turn—not very successfully. “You know, my foster-mother came of a family that had the second-sight; and possibly she may have communicated the gift to her nursing.”

Then, after a few moments’ silence, he spoke abruptly and like his ordinary self, as if he had taken a resolution and was determined to act upon it.

“I shall rent a house in London

for a year, from the end of the autumn. Grace must be introduced, and should go to a Drawing-room next spring; and she may as well pass the winter in town. I trust we shall see you there: there are sure to be plenty of spare bedrooms.”

Whereupon, without waiting for a reply, he shook hands, and walked out of the room, leaving his nephew to very grave reflections.

CHAPTER XIV.—MR AND MISS MORAY “COME OUT.”

Nine months are supposed to have elapsed, as they say in the play-bills. It is early spring in London, and drawing on towards the beginning of the season. The Morays are very comfortably established in a moderate-sized mansion in Eaton Place. Glenconan had thought of renting a house, but subsequently he had changed his views. He had listened to the words of worldly wisdom as they fell from the lips of Lady Fortrose,—a far-away Highland cousin, and a very *grande dame*. The Morays, having gone to Fortrose Castle on a visit of a few days the year before, had passed nearly a month under that hospitable roof. Her ladyship had taken a fancy to Grace; his lordship and Moray had much in common. Lady Fortrose having married a pair of pretty daughters, had her time much at her own disposal, and welcomed a new interest. She admired Grace as much as she liked her, and felt she would be a very desirable *protégée*. And if it pleased her to take a young lady by the hand, it was everything to the girl from a social point of view. She had more than the *entrée* to the best society; admission to her house was coveted by

everybody save the few who came there as a matter of course. It opened the gates of possible paradises to marriageable young women, for she only welcomed those who were attractive, and she always managed to have the best men. Lord Fortrose was an English baron as well as a Scottish earl; and though he spoke but seldom and shortly in the House, he had always carried a certain weight in politics. He had collieries in Durham and coverts in Kent, as well as his famous forest in Perthshire; his French cook had taken honours in the imperial kitchens at Berlin, as the most promising *élève* of Urbain Dubois; and his cellars, both in the country and in town, were celebrated for their well-selected contents. So my lord’s little dinners in Belgrave Square launched wealthy young *viveurs* into her ladyship’s small receptions, in the mood to be soothed by soft music and won by the witcheries of beauty to wise indiscretions. And Lady Fortrose, with all her inclinations to worldliness, was really a worthy woman and a reliable chaperon. No wonder, then, that Moray had met her advances more than half-way, and was willing to listen to her advice.

His motherless daughter could have no better friend.

He had written to London agents about houses, and one of them chanced to mention the mansion in Eaton Place. Mr Moray, he knew, had not intended to purchase; but possibly, under the circumstances, he might be tempted. The proprietor had suddenly died, and his heir had given instructions to dispose of it. It was newly and handsomely furnished and fitted up: decorations by Trollope, furnishing by Gillow; and all in good and simple style. A moderate price would be accepted for money down; and the agent could recommend it as a safe investment.

Moray mentioned the matter to Lady Fortrose. She exerted herself about it in the most flattering manner! "Really, my dear Mr Moray, it seems a special interposition of Providence. Your house and ours will be within easy distance of each other: Grace can run across at any time, with the footman or even with her maid; and I can always pick her up of an evening, without going any distance out of my way. If it were only for my sake, you must not hesitate. You must write—or better, telegraph at once."

Moray did not telegraph, but he bought the house; and hitherto he had no cause to regret the purchase. Lady Fortrose grew more affectionate and more motherly every day; her husband was almost as fond of Grace as she was: and so the girl had a couple of homes, and perhaps more gaiety than was good for her. She went out shopping with her ladyship in the brougham of a morning; she went visiting with her, or into the Park, in the barouche of an afternoon. On fine days she rode out under his lordship's escort when her father was not inclined

to get on horseback; and she might have had any number of engagements in the evenings, but that she often insisted on staying at home and keeping him company. As for Moray, he enjoyed the town life but moderately. He had his clubs, to which he had been elected years before, on his occasional visits to England. He had his cronies, chiefly from the Highlands or the East—though, being essentially a man of the world, he made acquaintances in many circles. There was society enough at the house in Eaton Place, where the dinners were very sufficiently well served, if less *recherché* than Lord Fortrose's. He often rode out with his daughter; he sometimes went in for a day's golfing at Wimbledon. But all the same, the existence dragged, and would have been still more wearisome had it not been for two unselfish sources of pleasure. The one was seeing his daughter happy; the other, his indulging himself—for indulgence it was—in many an action of generous philanthropy. The memorable conversation with Leslie had borne fruit in one way if not in another. He had not made public expiation by sacrificing his fortune, but he practised liberality on an almost prodigal scale. He not only drew handsome cheques for estimable charities, but he never spared himself; and he mortified the flesh as much as he indulged it. He had a vigorous constitution and an excellent appetite; he was much more inclined to be a *bon vivant* than an ascetic; and when he gave dinner-parties at home or dined with other people, he always set his friends a good example. But after the coffee and cigars, he would slip away; or he would charter a cab after breakfast next morning, and drive off to the Surrey side or the Borough, or to

the poverty-stricken purlieus of eastern London. He had struck up an intimacy with sundry hard-working and self-sacrificing clergymen, who knew they might always draw on his purse. He had munificently subsidised certain police inspectors, who were ever ready to give him their company or an escort at the shortest notice. But indeed he had come to be tolerably well known himself in some of the worst of the warrens and most squalid of the rookeries; and he was known for a man who could take his own part, as he was far from being pharisaical as to publicans and sinners. More than once he had been hustled on a dark staircase, when the assailants had felt the iron muscles of a man who was more than a match for half-a-dozen of them. But then he would distribute shillings in place of soup-tickets, and seldom asked for a voucher from the charity organisation society before

putting his hand in his pocket. "Probably," he would tell himself, "the poor wretch is lying. Certainly ninepence out of my shilling will be spent in the gin-palace at the corner—and what then? If he gets himself a loaf, I shall have done a good action; and as for the liquor, that is his look-out. It is something to forget one's misery for five minutes; and if I had as reasonable an excuse for my own mistakes or misconduct—why, perhaps I might be justified in throwing stones at him."

So, while his friends agreed that Moray was odd, upon the whole they liked and admired him for his "eccentricities." The more so, that he left rumour to blow his trumpet, never letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing, and only making a confidant of his daughter—for from her he could keep no secrets.

CHAPTER XV.—VENABLES AND LESLIE TALK THINGS OVER.

Leslie and Venables were both in town, and Grace saw a great deal of her cousins. Moray's house was always open to them; and they "drew him," as Jack phrased it, very freely for luncheon, and not unfrequently for dinner. Leslie, who loved to be independent, had declined his uncle's offer of a bedroom, and established himself in apartments in Jermyn Street, where he was said to have become a slave of the lamp. Though he rose early and took a constitutional before breakfast, after coming home from dining out or at his club, he was in the habit of sitting up to most unchristian hours; and his friendly landlady took Miss Moray into her confidence, expressing heartfelt anxiety

as to his health. The young man looked pale, though perhaps his handsome face was all the more interesting for that. But his friends, and Grace in particular, found him changed otherwise, and considerably to his advantage. Quiet and rather prematurely dignified in manner as he always was, he was more easily moved now from his constitutional apathy. There was a sparkle in his hazel eyes which would break out in flashes of flame on any subject that interested him; and more frequently than before, as he warmed, he would forget himself and become winningly eloquent. He had good introductions and connections, and already he began to make his mark. He was a welcome guest at many

a dinner-table. Men of station and high reputation listened to him respectfully—for when he spoke he always spoke to the purpose; and there was a certain poetical originality in his talk, with a quaint and fanciful humour. Grace watched him curiously and with cousinly regard. Womanlike, she admired him more, that others evidently admired him. Now there was apparently some purpose in his life. He seemed to see his way, and to have hopes rather than aspirations. And from what she knew of him, she was persuaded that he would go forward with determination toward his determined point, whatever that might be.

As for Jack Venables, there was less doubt as to his prospects. Unlike Leslie, he made no secret of his aims, which indeed were sufficiently obvious. Jack had lighted on his legs, and was making the most of his chances; and it was well for him that it was so. Steady disappointments or a run of ill-luck might have crippled him, as cold paralyses the constitution of a creole. But with the feeling that Fortune was patting him on the back, he played card after card with cool audacity, and brightened in the smiles in which he basked. Fortune might pet but she did not spoil him, and he bore his honours, such as they were, so modestly that nobody envied him his luck. It was Winstanley who had dealt him his trumps, taking a fatherly pride in him, and standing sponsor to him in society. Winstanley had done for him more than Lady Fortrose for Grace. He could hardly have happened on a more efficient patron, for Winstanley was welcome wherever he went, knew everybody who was worth the knowing, and had opportunities of doing good turns to so many men, that many men were ready to fawn

upon his friend. And Jack was more than a friend: he was the son of the house; he was become a connecting-link between its master and its mistress, for he had carried the heart of Mrs Winstanley on a first introduction. Jack, who ought to have known best, and whose worst enemies could not have taxed him with any want of candour when it was a question of talking confidentially to friends, had explained the situation to Leslie, shortly after Leslie's arrival in town. Possibly he may have spoken a little boastfully, but for that we may make due deduction.

"Well, Jack, I presume your career is fixed now, and you mean to blossom out a full-blown financier?"

"Financier—financier,—that depends how you understand the word. If you mean a professional money-maker who thinks of nothing else, you never were much wider of the mark. If you mean that I hope to be like one of the financiers of the old French *régime*, who ground the helpless in their hardness, that in their ostentation they might be *écrasé* by the *noblesse*, you never were more mistaken in your life. A man who goes in for mere money-making is contemptible. Besides, I have no fancy for being a cockshy for the curses of the widow and the orphan. I don't care about them. But if you mean that I am likely to have many opportunities of turning legitimate speculations to lucrative account, and if you add that I don't intend to neglect them—there, my boy, you are right."

"Why, Jack, you have turned strangely fiery; but you need not be so sensitive on the point of honour. Wait till anybody impugns it. I only want to hear how you get on."

"And so you shall, my dear

Ralph: I see no reason for being silent; and you have a right to know everything, even if you were not the very fellow I should naturally come to in a scrape. You helped me out of one already, you may remember. Though I seldom speak of it, I never forget."

"It was you and your affairs we were talking about," rejoined Leslie, hastily. "And you really like the Winstanleys, and get on with them?"

"Like them—yes, I like them all; and as for the old gentleman himself, he is a trump. I owe pretty nearly everything to him and to that shipwreck which I mentioned to you. My legacy was all very well, and I am most grateful to the worthy testator; but it is Winstanley who has made it fructify in the meantime, with the hopes of bearing forty-fold fruits in the future. He has let me in for half-a-dozen good things already; and each of them may be a stepping-stone to something better. It is all a question of getting the preliminary capital together; then it must go on rolling up of itself."

"*Ce n'est que le premier pas que coûte*," and I imagine that initial difficulty has puzzled many people. However, with your legacy and your friend, you have so far solved it; so we may hope the best. And this discriminating old gentleman has taken a veritable fancy to you?"

"To tell the truth, old fellow,—I know it will go no further, but I love to make a clean breast when I can,—to tell the truth, it is something more than a fancy. He overrates me, I know, but somehow I suit him; and he appears to take a sort of fatherly pride in me. In short, he has made me one of his pet speculations, and he is determined the speculation shall

succeed. He has employed me already in all manner of business, and insists on paying or promising me handsome commissions. Nor does he ever neglect an opportunity of pushing me in society; and he has helped me to any number of useful acquaintances."

"Well, I congratulate you with all my heart upon your good fortune;" and to do him justice, Leslie probably meant it, though the unwelcome thought would flash through his mind, that this gay, gallant, prosperous young fellow would surely be a formidable rival with Grace. And perhaps it was by a natural sequence of ideas that he asked, "And the ladies of the Winstanley household, how do you stand with them?"

"Oh, the ladies!" said Jack, laughing; "I was *au mieux* from the first with both mother and daughter. Mrs Winstanley wants managing—perhaps her husband, clever diplomatist as he is, hardly has the knack of it; but she and I hit it off admirably. The day may come when I may have to choose between the two; and then, of course, gratitude must decide my choice. But in the meantime, Mrs Winstanley and I are the best friends in the world."

"And how is it with the fair Miss Julia, if it be not an indiscreet question?"

"Indiscreet! By no manner of means. Julia is very good-looking,—classical features, pearly complexion, faultless figure, and all the rest of it; she is highly accomplished as well: and of course I admire her, as everybody else does. But she knows, too, that she can never touch my heart; so we are on the easiest possible footing. Then we are allies, though we have never acknowledged it to each other, with common interests and a common object."

"As how, if it please you? You certainly seem to have made the most of your time."

"Why, simply because hitherto it has been Julia's mission to keep the peace between her father and her mother. Perhaps talking of keeping the peace is going too far, because they are too well-bred and too sensible to quarrel. And indeed, I believe Mrs Winstanley to be still in love with her husband, otherwise she would never bear him a grudge. But he gave her Art and those speculations of his for rivals, and she has never forgiven it; nor was it flattering that 'duty' was always sending him on foreign missions, where the climates did not suit her constitution. She likes pictures herself, but she will not sympathise with his buying them. She likes money, and she spends a deal of it; but she has nothing to say in favour of his happiest speculations; and to this day she resents his habit of roving about the world *en garçon*. Julia assures me that her mother was in a terrible taking when she heard of that shipwreck of ours. Yet when she received the prodigal on his safe return, she does not seem to have sinned on the side of tenderness, and she intimated a verdict of 'serve you right.' No wonder that a good-tempered but gouty gentleman was apt to ride rusty in the circumstances. Then Julia throws oil on the troubled waters; and the girl has even more than her father's tact."

"That is all very well, so far as the young lady is concerned, and much to her credit. But I don't quite understand how Mrs Winstanley should make you welcome in the house, seeing you go heart and soul into all her husband's schemes."

Jack blushed a little. Perhaps with all his frankness he did not

care to declare how "diplomatic" he had been in domestic talks with the lady. But it was not easy to take him aback, and he had a plausible answer.

"Oh, that is easily explained. Mrs Winstanley is a woman of sense, and understands her husband by this time. She knows that he cannot live without his speculations; that to the last day of his life, bar gout in the foot, he would go half across Europe for an 'old master' that tempted him. But if he is not to be weaned from his passion, he may do much of his work by deputy; and she is willing he should adopt me as a sort of roving partner in the concern, as a better kind of commercial traveller in whose discretion he may confide. In that case, she might domesticate and reclaim him, even at the eleventh hour. For, love apart, she feels it anything but gratifying that her husband should show himself almost ostentatiously independent of her. That at least is my theory of her motives, though she has never told me as much in so many words; and you must own the theory is plausible."

"Perhaps so," rejoined Leslie, somewhat dubiously. "Now one other question, and the examination is at an end." But having said so much, he hesitated. For the life of him he could not help the hesitation, though he would have given much to have spoken easily as before.

"Out with it!" said Jack, unsuspiciously.

"How comes it, then, that this man and this woman of the world, with a daughter and heiress both beautiful and rich, throw her into the company of Mr Jack Venables, who is not without his ambitions and his fascinations? It must surely have struck them, if it has not struck you, that Mr

Venables might take a short cut to becoming more a member of the family than he has been."

If Leslie hoped that, notwithstanding what he had said before as to his easy footing with Miss Winstanley, Jack would have added something now towards relieving him from the apprehension of any rivalry, he was doomed to disappointment. Jack, in his turn, felt embarrassed—but only for a moment. After all, he had only to say what Leslie knew, or ought to have known; and if he had any doubts, he should have avoided the subject. So he answered lightly but decidedly—

"I repaid confidence with confidence. I was frank with old Winstanley from the first, and told him of my hopes and my affections. He knows that I have set my heart on Grace. Whether she will ever have me, who can say? In any case, Miss Winstanley is safe, so far as I am concerned; and her parents are persuaded she may die an old maid, for anything I should suggest to the contrary."

Whereupon he got up and took

his leave; nor did Leslie make any attempt to detain him. Jack held that, if anything, he had the prior claims; and Leslie could only feel that it was a fair match between them. Down at Glenconan, Leslie would have said that the chances were all in his favour. Here, in London, he was by no means so sure. Like most men of real merit, he set a very modest value on himself; and in the whirl of society, Grace seemed to be swept away from him into spheres whither he scarcely cared to follow her. Should she be demoralised by fashionable company, she would be no mate for him; and though he was sure he could never get over his disappointment, he was not the man to go chasing a Will-o'-the-wisp. All the same, he hoped better things: he could not forget the communion of their spirits over the case of the forlorn widow in the Highland glen. And so, with an effort of the will, he tried to dismiss the subject in the meantime, turning for doubtful comfort to his books and the papers that littered the writing-table.

CHAPTER XVI.—POLITICS AND POETRY.

Possibly Jack Venables might be deeply in love: he missed no opportunity of making himself agreeable to his cousin; but he did not give much time to sentimental meditations. Never did any man lead a fuller life, and his physical energies were inexhaustible. He might dine late; he might go to dances and receptions; but all the same he would be up betimes, fresh as if he had gone to bed at eleven, with a basin of gruel by way of nightcap. Day after day Mr Winstanley became more con-

vinced that he could never have hit on an apter pupil, or a more intelligent and agreeable young companion. Jack understood him *à demi-mot*, and spared him all the trouble of tedious explanations. Making some slight allowance for necessary inexperience, he could trust him almost as he could trust himself. Flying threatenings from his enemy the gout might be a nuisance, but they were no longer aggravated by business anxieties. He cast his cares on the shoulders of his versatile young friend. Then

Jack was always ready to amuse him. He brought the budget of the afternoon's news to the dining-room in Berkeley Square; he was better than the best of the evening papers, for his *chronicles du jour* were invariably entertaining. He kept Mrs Winstanley in good humour too, and acted as a patent lightning-conductor to avert domestic storms. Altogether, Winstanley blessed the mischance which had so providentially placed them on so intimate a footing.

Of course Winstanley was habitually selfish: but happily selfishness may have its softer side, and is not always logically consistent, otherwise the world, where it is a case of every one for himself, would be an infinitely more disagreeable place than it is. It might be supposed that Winstanley, having found such a treasure, would have done his best to monopolise it. He might easily have paid his debt of gratitude indirectly out of his pocket, and left his *protégé* no reason to complain. But whether it were that he had become disinterestedly attached to the young man, or whether, as Jack had suggested to Leslie, he took a personal pride in his success, certain it is that he did not confine himself to either financial or social patronage; and one morning Jack was surprised and touched by a proposal very unexpectedly made him.

It was his habit to look in at Berkeley Square after breakfast. Usually he was shown into Winstanley's library on the ground-floor; sometimes, though not very often, he was asked to walk upstairs to the ladies. On this particular morning Winstanley was awaiting him with evident impatience. Jack, who had learned to read him pretty thoroughly, saw that he had a piece of news to communicate, and that the news

was good and great. So he put on an impassive expression of countenance, and waited to be astonished. All the same, he discounted it in his own mind. "It's something about that concession of the Transcaucasian Telegraphs; and perhaps I could tell him as much as he knows."

"You have sometimes thought of trying your hand at politics—eh, Mr Jack?"

"Politics, sir! Politics! Well, yes, I have—vaguely. I suppose most men in my position, with fair possibilities before them, must sometimes think of going into Parliament, sooner or later. My hands, as you know, are full enough for the present, and there is plenty of time before me. But may I ask whether your question has any immediate meaning?"

"Assuredly you may ask, and I am ready to answer. I know your hands are pretty full; but it appears to me that you always manage to get through your business. Naturally you don't think of Parliament for years to come. You are far too practical and sensible. Parliament is no profession, except for a man of easy means. But there are other political openings besides the House of Commons; and politics may be made to pay by a clever and aspiring young man, irrespectively altogether of any paltry salary."

"No doubt, sir. But as I cannot guess what you are hinting at, I can express no opinion on a particular case. I need hardly say that if you have anything to suggest, it is sure to command my best consideration. Hitherto, I have always followed your advice implicitly."

"So you have, and you have been none the worse for it, I hope; and you are perfectly right not to commit yourself rashly, or to take a jump in the dark. You have

heard there are to be important changes in the Cabinet?"

"Certainly, sir—that is matter of notoriety, though there are only rumours as to the shuffling of the cards."

"He can't be commissioned to make me an offer of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer," thought Jack, "or even the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster,—though that last is precisely the berth that would suit me down to the ground."

"Yes, there are to be important changes; and it has pleased the Premier, not a bit too soon, to consider the paramount claims of my brother. The Lord Privy Seal goes to Ireland, and Wrekin is to take his place."

Jack was, of course, full of congratulations, which Winstanley received with affected indifference.

"Wrekin should have had office when the Cabinet was formed, as he had undoubted capacity for a place of more active responsibility. However, perhaps the Minister could hardly have done more for him in the circumstances; and that he should have done so much is some apology for the past. But that is neither here nor there. The offer was made and accepted more than a week ago. Now Wrekin, as it chanced, anticipated me, in coming to consult about a private secretary. There were two connections of his who might plausibly push their pretensions: he did not greatly care about either; and in making choice of the one, he would give deadly offence to the other. One is Winnington, his wife's nephew; the other is Tressylan, his son-in-law's brother. 'It's a deuced embarrassing dilemma,' said he, 'for choose which I will, the pair of them will be always at each other's throats; there will be family cabals and all manner of unpleasantness; and if I

accept place on those terms, adieu to domestic peace.'"

"'It is an awkward dilemma,' said I, 'and the best way out of it is to choose neither. Then by-and-by, when both have resigned themselves to the inevitable, you may hope to enter on a quiet life. Tell Winnington and Tressylan that I had your promise; and as it happens, I have the very man for you.'"

"'And who may he be?' Wrekin asked, very naturally. So then I spoke out seriously, and told him that you were the man for the place. At first he protested, and objected to your youth and inexperience. These, I insisted, were strong recommendations, considering your very remarkable adaptability. You may be sure I said more than enough in your favour, which I won't make you blush by repeating. But I reminded him, that though our acquaintance has been short, I had proved you already in all manner of ways. I said that as you knew nothing of the work, he could train and form you as he pleased; that I could answer for your tact, discretion, intelligence, industry,—all the rest of it. Wrekin already liked what he had seen of you; and, in short, I gave you so good a character, that you will have to excel yourself in order to justify it, if you take the post. Which of course you will! Its pay is not to be despised, though that is a secondary consideration. It sets your foot several rungs higher on the ladder, and there is no saying how quickly you may climb. If you make yourself useful, Wrekin will look after that. Probably he will be shifted to a less ornamental office: at any rate, he commands powerful interest—and I shall be always at his elbow to waken him up."

Jack grasped the advantages of the situation at once, and was really overpowered with gratitude. He grasped Winstanley's hand too, and thanked him with genuine earnestness.

"Personally, of course, it is all I can desire, and infinitely more than I could have hoped. There is only one thing makes me hesitate."

"And that is?"

"Well, it sounds bumptious, I know; but I flattered myself that I may sometimes have been serviceable to you. As private secretary, my time would be chiefly Lord Wrekin's or the country's; in any case, I should be tied to town here."

"Serviceable! Yes, of course you have been serviceable, or I should never have spoken to my brother. I weighed matters well before making the suggestion, and decided that any considerations personal to myself must not be permitted to stand in your way. Moreover, there is no reason why we should not continue to work together; for the duties of a secretary demand distraction, and I believe your capacity for work to be unlimited. Should there be anything special to be done abroad now and then, I may make interest with Wrekin for a few days' holiday; and with regard to those various financial schemes of ours, there will be no harm in your forming political connections. And as these ripen, and when you have had a certain political training, we shall see about the seat in Parliament, where you may blossom into statesmanship if you can. If you don't sit in a Cabinet before you die, you shall only have yourself to blame."

"Nothing would surprise me now, sir; and if her Majesty sent for me to-morrow, it would not be much more of a sensation than this."

"Well, that you may be ready for any eventuality, we had better

settle this bit of business out of hand. If you ring the bell at your elbow there, I shall send for the brougham, and carry you off for official presentation to my lord."

It said a good deal for Mr Venables's popularity, that the news of the piece of good fortune that had befallen him was received with considerable astonishment, but general approbation. In fact, his pleasant manners, and modest though manly bearing, had made him a universal favourite, and went far towards disarming envy. Messrs Winnington and Tressylan were naturally bitter: they pitied Lord Wrekin, who must be falling into his dotage; as public men and patriots, they deplored a wanton abuse of patronage. But nobody else appeared to think that the appointment was likely to shake the foundations of the State. The social journals mentioned the matter rather kindly; though one of them, greatly to Jack's annoyance, remarked that it never rained but it poured, and hinted at the probability of the marriage of the fortunate youth with a lovely and richly-dowered heiress, one of the darlings of Belgravian society. It was a double-barrelled suggestion, which might apply equally well either to Julia Winstanley or Grace Moray, and consequently might be doubly embarrassing. On the other hand, the *double entendre* was so far advantageous, that neither of the young ladies need take it home to herself. Nor did the self-consciousness of either give him any reason to suspect that the indiscreet *canard* had been brought under her notice. Miss Winstanley congratulated him in all good-fellowship—in the course of conversation almost giving him to suspect that she deserved some credit for bringing about the arrangement. And as she spoke of the

prospects brightening before him, animation lighting up her fine eyes, and sending an unwonted glow through the pure alabaster of her cheeks, he thought he had never seen her look so handsome. Oddly enough, for the first time since he had known her, he felt much inclined for a little love-making; but though fascinated by an unwonted softness in her manner, he honourably resisted the temptation.

It was almost a duty to say all that was civil to Miss Winstanley, but it was both a duty and a pleasure to tell his cousin Grace. On the memorable day when the matter was decided, he had arranged to dine in Eaton Place. It was more than possible that there might be other guests, and he was anxious to see his cousin alone. So he sent a note, telling her frankly that he had something to communicate which she would be pleased to hear, and hoping he might find her in the drawing-room half an hour before dinner. Grace had her own share of feminine curiosity, and was dressed and down-stairs ten minutes before the time. She was going to a dance under Lady Fortrose's wing in the evening, and was attired in a prettily-fancied toilet. Perhaps Leslie might have liked her all the better in virgin white, with only a string of pearls and a ribbon or so. But Jack Venables, whose artistic tastes were more worldly, freely used his cousinly privileges, and went into unfeigned raptures over a *chef-d'œuvre* of Madame Antoinette's. If Miss Winstanley was handsome, Miss Moray was more what might be called pretty; but with her high-bred air toned down by the sweet simplicity which even her Belgravian experiences and conquests could not efface, she might have stepped down from a canvas of Vandyck's,

allowing for changes in the fashions. What a lovely young matron the girl would make, to do the honours of the drawing-room of a rising politician! Yet he thought at the moment that the world might be well lost if he could marry her, and live quietly down at Glenconan. Grace welcomed him none the less warmly for his evident admiration; but she laughingly cut his compliments short.

"You never made a special assignation with me, Jack, to glorify Madame Antoinette's designs; and as I told papa that you were bringing a budget of news with you, it is more than likely he may interrupt us at any moment."

"You don't say so, Grace! And to punish you for your treachery, I have more than a mind to say nothing till he does come; only that in punishing you, I should sacrifice myself, and deny myself the pleasure I have been counting upon all day." Then he changed his manner, and spoke with more lover-like softness. "I make so sure that you are interested in all that concerns me, that I come straight to you with the intelligence of my last piece of good-luck." He did not deem it needful, by the way, to make any allusion to his parenthetical talk on the subject with Miss Winstanley.

"Oh, I am so glad, Jack! What is it?"

Then he gave her the story at length. Nor had he any cause to complain of want of sympathy. Grace was delighted, and showed her pride in his progress; for, like the best of women, she was inclined to worship success. And as his prospects lost nothing by Jack's painting, and as he had the most heartfelt faith in the promises of his future, from private secretary of the Lord Privy Seal to First Minister of the

Crown seemed to her a very possible transition. Her father, when he joined them, if less excited, was almost equally well pleased. He had always believed the boy had stuff in him; but as a man of action, he had never quite forgiven Jack in his heart for not accepting his offers of introductions in the East. Now the refusal seemed amply justified. With Jack's versatility, he could pick and choose among the openings that his ready intelligence made for himself. "The boy is born to get on; and he is honourable and straightforward to boot, as I have good reason to say, when I remember what passed at Glenconan. Who would have thought, when I half encouraged him in his audacity there, that he would so soon have gained the position he has at present? So that the legacy of £10,000 becomes comparatively a bagatelle. If he only continues going forward as he has begun, Grace might do worse from a worldly point of view."

At that very moment the door was flung open—not to announce dinner, but "Mr Leslie." Leslie, like Venables, was always made welcome in Eaton Place, on the chance of his uncle dining at home. "Ah, I was forgetting Ralph, poor fellow!" mused Moray. "Well, he must take his chance, like other men; for me, I can only say of Grace—'How happy might she be with either!'"

Leslie walked in very briskly for him, looking unusually bright and well. Grace, who was full of what she had just heard, burst out and told him all about it. Not one of Jack's many friends were to be more cordial in congratulations. As Leslie seized him by both hands, and told him frankly how very glad he was, Jack felt humiliating pangs of self-reproach. Had not

a very considerable part of his satisfaction come from the thought that he had made a fresh advance on Ralph?—that the hare was running right away, and that the tortoise was left hopelessly behind? Yet Leslie had saved his life; and that evening, in the wild hills of Loch Rosque, he had vowed and felt eternal gratitude. However, his confusion was not remarked, or was set down to anything rather than the real cause. And when the dinner was over and the servants had withdrawn, as the party returned to the subject, his self-complacency was nearly restored. After all, a man cannot altogether control his thoughts,—and it is something to be sincerely ashamed when they are discreditable. When the subject seemed pretty well exhausted, he changed it: vanity whispered that more than enough had been made of what, a year or two later, might appear trivial in the retrospect. And it was then that Leslie, speaking more deliberately than usual, remarked that he too had something to say that might interest them. "Although," as he modestly added, "it is much less exciting than Jack's communication."

"Never mind," said Moray; "let us hear and judge for ourselves."

Grace smiled kindly on him, but did not apparently expect to be much startled a second time. As for Jack, he was necessarily preoccupied: nevertheless he constrained himself to listen politely, and to be ready to say something civil.

"The truth is," said Leslie—and he looked at Grace,— "the truth is, that I have taken the bull by the horns at last, and brought out a little volume of poems. It embodies some of my pleasantest memories of the Highlands, and one or two dramatic scenes at Glenconan."

Whereupon, and at the mention of scenes in Glenconan, Grace expressed unmistakable interest. As for her father, who did not greatly care for poetry, he merely said that he hoped the book might be successful. But he spoke in the doubtful tone that forebodes discreditable failure. Had Leslie been less generous, he might have enjoyed his revenge, when he went on to explain quietly that the volume seemed to have scored a certain success already, though it had only made its appearance, and anonymously, in the beginning of last week. Jack Venables pricked up his ears, and broke out, "Surely you don't mean 'The Idyls of the North'? You don't mean to tell us that you are the author?"

"That is just what I do mean. But here are the first-fruits of fame, with a vengeance! I did not think that poetry was much in your line, Master Jack."

"No more it is, as a general rule, and I am ashamed to say that I have not looked beyond the back of the 'Idyls.' But an exceedingly handsome book it is—externally; and it is just like you depreciating it as a little volume. It is lucky that you are not left to blow your own trumpet in the way of criticism. The fact is, I was dining last night at the Winstanleys—it was rather a literary party; they got talking of this new poem, and half the men were in raptures over it. Cutler, the editor of the 'Critical World,' was there, and he said he remembered no volume of poems in his time, except by the Laureate, or Browning, or one of the big swells, that had been so promptly and favourably received."

"So my publishers assure me," said Leslie. "In the course of the last few days there have been reviews in the 'Times' and the

'Saturday Review,' the 'Athenæum' and the 'Critical World'—all of them only too flattering. I can only attribute the prompt appearance of the articles to friendly interest made in my favour. Before publishing, I had taken the opinion of one of the illustrious authors Venables named—not the Laureate, by the way—and he expressed himself so pleased by some of the little poems, that he insisted upon carrying the manuscript away, to show in strict confidence."

"I do not know how that may be," said Jack, "but no one seemed to think that the reviews were too flattering—quite the reverse. Old Cutler paid you the compliment of remembering a couplet or two from 'The Highland Widow,' I think he called it, and declaiming it over his claret with most seductive effect and emphasis."

There Grace again caught Leslie's eye; and Jack, who intercepted the look, was far from liking it. He could make his cousin's eye to dance and sparkle, but Leslie was telegraphing dangerous sympathy. However, he was resolved to expiate his fault in having crowed over Leslie when he got his appointment; and chivalrously, although considerably against the grain, he went on singing *in solo* at second-hand the praises that had resounded round the Berkeley Square dinner-table. Grace listened with an attention that was doubtfully gratifying. When he had done his duty, and seemed to have run down, she rose and left the dining-room. Immediately afterwards the bell in the drawing-room was heard to ring sharply. And when the gentlemen, some time afterwards, followed her up-stairs, they found her sitting up to the ankles in news-sheets. She had sent a servant to knock up the nearest news-agent.

She came forward to meet Leslie, with both hands extended.

"Oh, Ralph, if you were only proud as I am! But you seem to take it all as if it were a matter of course; and perhaps you are right."

"Don't fancy that," Ralph hastened to protest. "If it really should prove a success, it has taken me entirely by surprise. If I sometimes dared to dream that I had something of the poet in me, I distrust the popularity that takes the public by storm."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Moray impatiently, for he could neither understand nor sympathise with his nephew's sensibilities. "Byron woke up one morning to find himself famous, and you may safely condescend to make a reputation in the same way."

"And success is the test of merit or genius," added Jack, sententiously. "You may depend upon that."

"Only listen to this, and to this, and to this," chimed in Grace, picking up two or three of the papers, and rapidly reading extracts from them. It must be owned that Leslie never found her voice so musical, and the flattery that fell from her lips sounded not only sweet but true. And still more seductively sweet were her accents when she began to favour them with some passages from the poems. She knew best why she did not begin with an extract from "The Highland Widow," though it was uppermost in her thoughts. But she charmed them with a picture of the wooded ravine in Glenconan at daybreak—which made Moray bring his hand down on the table, declaring that he saw the very scene before him. And she quoted an idealised and slightly humorous sketch of Donald Ross, which made Venables burst out laughing.

"When the old fellow recog-

nises it, as he is sure to do, I don't know whether he will be gratified or owe you a grudge. You have hit his foibles off to a hair, and yet you have touched his good points so prettily that he might be a saint or a hermit instead of a Highland keeper. The portraiture is inimitable, and yet it is hardly Donald. It is Donald as he might appear in Paradise with some lingering taint of the flesh, and with as strong a smell of the hunting-field still about him as if he were an Esau just come home from the chase. The poet's pen, with a discreet use of a fanciful imagination, leaves the painter with his brushes leagues behind. Do you remember, Grace, how I tried to touch off your friend Donald for you? but only put my daub alongside of Ralph Leslie's verses, and then tell me how you should place the two."

Now this was exceedingly generous of Jack,—far more generous than any one, except perhaps Grace, suspected. The praises of the poems were gall and wormwood to his more worldly nature. Grace's undisguised admiration for them was fresh fuel with a blast of the bellows to the smouldering fires of his jealousy. But the self-reproaches, before Ralph had come forward in this new character, had given him timely warning to stand on his guard. So with a manly effort he pulled himself together, bringing his will to the succour of his better feelings. It is a question for casuists how far he had conquered, seeing that his heart was at variance with his lips. But Grace, who had not been unconscious of the strife, gave him all credit for his victory; and it was apparently destined that when either of the rivals made a start, the other was to come closely treading upon his heels.

HOME TRUTHS ON THE CROFTER AGITATION.

BY AN OLD HIGHLANDER.

BEHOLD how great a matter a little fire kindleth! There is a conflagration in Skye. What is it about? The people there are better off than they have been for many years, on account of the opening of railways and the improved communication with the Lowlands. They talk of poverty. Where there are widows and orphans, and old men and women past work, there must be poverty there, as everywhere else; but where, as in Skye, if there is a man in the house, he starts off in April—where there is scarcely a young or middle-aged man in the island during the summer and autumn months, and where all bring back good wages for their work on the agricultural farms of the Lothians and Perthshire, and also from the East Coast fishing—there can be no general poverty, such as there was up to twenty years ago, to cause such an outbreak.

We fear it can be proved that this commotion has arisen from the untruthfulness, the love of notoriety, the vanity, and the petty ambition of a few individuals.

In 1885 Major Fraser bought Lord Macdonald's estate of Kilmuir in Trotternish. He raised the rents, which had been exceptionally low, on both the large properties in the island. About the same time a discharged clerk in a public office established a newspaper, 'The Highlander.' Attacks were soon made on proprietors, and on Major Fraser in particular, who was said to be very harsh. Perhaps he was.

All he did was commented on and possibly exaggerated, for when he brought an action for defamation against the editor of 'The Highlander,' he obtained substantial damages.

Week after week statements were made, calculated to rouse a sensitive people. They were told that the land was their own, that they had a joint property in it, that the chiefs had wronged them by getting charters for themselves after 1745. This absurd untruth was and is still believed. They were also told that they were a brave people once, but were now abject and craven, allowing themselves to be trampled under foot by tyrants. What were their young men about? Were they not a degenerate race?

Let me examine this statement that the land was once their own, which has been persistently repeated at least once a-week for nearly seven years. All the old families have charters, from 1400 A.D. downwards, in which there is no mention whatever of any joint possession.

It is well known, and can be proved, that the greater part of the Macdonald and the whole of the Macleod estates, in Skye, were let for centuries, in what would now be called small farms, to the gentlemen of their respective clans. These were cattle-farms, where there were a few sheep only for home use, and on which numbers of servants were required, who were paid in kind—that is, were supplied with food of various kinds, wool, and other necessities,

but no money passed among them. Except potato ground, these dependants, the ancestors of the present crofters, had *no land whatever*. The ruined huts and shielings which are still to be seen were occupied by them.

Most of the younger sons of the gentleman-farmer obtained commissions in the army, all the more readily as they were able to bring a good following from their father's farm, and as the spirited Highlander was only too glad to see the world with his young master, who often made a name for himself—witness the generals and colonels from Skye who abounded in the early days of this century.

The original tacksman class is now almost extinct. The era of large sheep-farms set in: the Lowland capitalist could give four times the rent that had been paid by the comparatively poor gentleman; and the tacksmen left the country in large numbers, many of them settling in America. Mr Macdonald still holds the farm of Balranald, which has descended from father to son since the fourteenth century; but with that exception, and perhaps one or two others, the old race has disappeared. It was *this* class that was dispossessed.¹ It was this class by whom the land was held—not, as is now pretended, by the grandfathers of the present crofters. There were few, if any, crofters then. (I speak of Skye only. It may have been different elsewhere; but it is Skye about which I have specially inquired.) It was this class which in very old times is said to have

had a share in the councils of the chief, and which may have had a sort of hereditary right to the tacks in its possession, though it must have been very long ago indeed, for the farms have let by regular lease since about A.D. 1600.

Professor Blackie made the mistake of ascribing to the present crofter class the rights of the numerous gentlemen of the clan. The lower orders were, according to tradition, very kindly treated, and therefore were better off than the corresponding class in other countries in the middle ages; but they, like the serfs in England, had no share in the land. The tacksmen departed;—

“Sad was the day and luckless was the hour”

for their dependants, when the wail of the pibroch accompanied the kind-hearted, hospitable gentlemen to the place of embarkation, when “*Cha till mi tuilleadh*”² echoed mournfully from the rocks around. Those who had served them were destitute, and had only the kelp-trade to depend on, for the large sheep-owners wanted but few servants. It has been said over and over again that the crofters were deprived of land, and driven to the sea-shore. It may have been so in a few instances, but such barbarity was not general. These stories have been grievously exaggerated—no wonder, when looked at, in a romantic mood, through a vista of from forty to eighty years. The father of the present Macleod, then only just of age,

¹ In Johnson and Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* (Croker's edition), it is stated that at that time (1773) a number of tacksmen emigrated to America against the wish and contrary to the advice of the proprietors, who, however, probably took a different view of this emigration later on, when high rents were offered for the vacant farms.

² “We shall return no more.”

and anxious to do the best for his people, gathered them into townships, and in 1811 gave them the farms of Roag, Harlash, Fernilea, and others, which had each been occupied by one gentleman-farmer only. Every tenant got from ten to twelve acres arable, with hill-pasture, which was ample for their wants then. On the Macdonald estates, a great deal of land was given at that time. There are too many people there now, but why? Because, in defiance of estate regulations, every man allowed his sons, and even his daughters, to marry and settle on his lands. As compared with labourers in England and elsewhere, these people are not poor now. Of late years, the men in every family have gone to the Lowlands for work; and that they have received good wages is borne out by the unanimous statements of the officials in the steamers which ply between Skye and Glasgow, that, instead of the Indian-meal and molasses imported twenty years ago, quantities of the best tea and sugar, meat, biscuits, an enormous amount of tobacco, and very luxurious articles of dress, arrive every week from the Lowlands.

Another statement as false as the assertion that the land belonged to the crofters, has been made in the 'Oban Times' by John Macpherson and others.

Mr Stewart Glennie says: "He [John Macpherson] had been telling me how Macleod cleared Bracadale of its inhabitants, because sheep paid better than men; had then committed the double injustice of thrusting the people of Bracadale into Glendale, thus immensely increasing the numbers, and proportionately diminishing the means of subsistence, of the Glendale people, and then sold

Glendale." What is the truth of this story? Forty years ago the present Macleod, then a young man, lived at home, and tried to improve the country. He wished to establish a fishing-station at Glendale, for which it was admirably suited, and which has since been a great success. Glendale had been let as a large sheep-farm to one man. Macleod determined to break it into small holdings, and offered it to some people in Bracadale, who gladly accepted the good fresh land. He gave each family as much as they could stock, but there was still some to spare. So far from clearing his own estate, he accepted the offer of some of Major Macdonald's people at Eilian Isan, merely because they were good fishermen, and gave them what was left. There was certainly not too many people then. As to his selling it, the disastrous famine of 1846-48 obliged him to do so. His estates were put under trust, and it was the trustees who sold Glendale, not Macleod, as stated by John Macpherson. These facts can be vouched for by several people still living. The story only shows how perverted the history of the Highlands has been by unscrupulous persons.

J. Macpherson also stated, in one of his lectures on the mainland, that he had himself seen in Glendale a poor old woman clinging to the rafters of her burning house, from which she had been evicted. Mr Macdonald of Tormore wrote to him to ask him what he meant, as there certainly had been no such eviction in Glendale. John was obliged to admit that he had read the story in the 'Celtic Magazine,' in which there had been a sensational account of the Sutherland burnings of seventy years ago. Tormore published this correspond-

ence with J. Macpherson in the 'Inverness Courier.'

Accusations have been brought against Major Fraser of harsh treatment of his people; but even if true, his property forms but a small part of the island. All I wish to ascertain is, that as for the last forty years, at all events, there have been no wholesale clearances, no raising of crofters' rents (except in the case of Major Fraser), why take this time of prosperity, when every man can get employment, to make the present uproar? The fact is that, believing the absurd untruths that are daily poured into their ears, the poor people have become demoralised.

A Glendale man says, "How hard it is, when we go to the South for work, to be obliged to pay rent, instead of spending our wages on our families." This is a hardship with which an English labourer could not sympathise, seeing that he has also to go for work wherever he can get it, and that he pays at least £7 a-year for a couple of rooms, while the Skye man pays only £3 or £4 for land that grows corn and potatoes, with grass for one cow if not for two: the Englishman has no cow at all, and what would his village landlord say if he told him he had a right to spend his earnings solely on himself and family, and pay no rent. However, far be it from us to say that these people have suffered no wrong. Nearly forty years ago, there was a disastrous famine in the land. For three successive years potatoes and corn failed: the men had not then got into the way of going to the Lowlands for work. There was absolute starvation, and the suffering was awful. One poor woman, in the extremity of hunger, and her

son, a young lad, seized a sheep, killed, and ate it. With returning strength came agony of mind on account of the crime committed. She walked to Portree, and gave herself up to the authorities. Strange to say, notwithstanding the extenuating circumstances, she and her son were sentenced to transportation to Australia. The case was brought before Sir C. Trevelyan, then Secretary to the Treasury, who procured her pardon, and got free passages for the husband and the rest of the family as emigrants. By the time they arrived, the Queen's pardon had come, and the reunited family joyfully entered their new home near Melbourne. But there were few such happy endings of a sorrowful beginning. The starvation became frightful. A noble subscription was raised in England, and was sent to Edinburgh, to the care of gentlemen there, who formed themselves into a committee. Unfortunately the science of political economy was then in its infancy. The great object of this committee was to avoid pauperising the people. Quite right, of course; but how did they set to work? They ordered that for a man's labour he should receive one pound of meal a-day, and one for each of his family. Surely if you take a man's work, the hardest political economist of the present day would say he had a right to fair money wages. Families require more than meal, and this rule caused much suffering. Another ordered that no one should be allowed to work, even for this pittance, as long as he had any cattle left. The consequence was, that comfortable people, who had four and five head of cattle each, but absolutely nothing to eat, were forced to sell all

they had. The cattle of the country disappeared. The whole population fell at once into the abyss of poverty, from which it took many years to recover. This disastrous rule was the ruin of the people it was meant to serve.

It may be very necessary, when administering the poor-law with funds levied parochially, to be careful that no one is unnecessarily assisted. But how different this case from that of an English parish! Here was a people suddenly struck by a dire calamity. The benevolence of England sends a magnificent sum to its relief. Let the men work for it, of course, but give them the usual wages. There was plenty of work—plenty of piers to make, and roads too, which were then, and still are, much wanted. There was abundance of money to pay for public works, and for boats and nets also, which would have carried out the wish of the benevolent donors, and would have benefited the Highlands for ever.

But no! The political economy of forty years ago said nothing must be done in the way of roads or piers, lest they might benefit the proprietors. Quite right not to help the landlords! The money was not subscribed for them, but for the people. Public works might have been of use to them, no doubt, indirectly; but it was the poor hungry ones who really required the employment, and who would have principally benefited by them. What was done? It was difficult to get work that would be useless to everybody, so a road or two was made where not wanted. One still exists, which goes straight up a steep hill, and leads nowhere except to the skies—a sad monument of the folly of clever men, who have got a new and crude idea in

their heads. An old Highland lady is reported to have said, when told of the goodness and kindheartedness of the individual members of this committee, "Ah! political economy is the last and best device of the devil for hardening the hearts of good men." Was she far wrong?

The committee did one good thing—it obtained employment for some of the men in the Lowlands. At first they went unwillingly. Their want of English and want of settled habits of industry were against them; but very soon their good behaviour and quiet determination to do their best gained on the farmers of East Lothian and Perthshire, who gave them cordial invitations to return the following season, as they preferred them to the Irish.

Now began the real exodus of the Highlanders! They went in numbers to the Lowlands, at first alone; then many sent for their families, and remained permanently—some in Glasgow, some in Greenock, and in the villages of the adjacent counties. They were not driven away by landlords and factors, as is now said, but they went because they had been starved: they had no cattle left; their land for three years had yielded neither corn nor potatoes; there was no one to help them, for the famine had much added to the embarrassments of the Lord Macdonald of the day, which resulted in his selling Kilmuir in Trotternish to Major Fraser. Macleod of Macleod was ruined, and was earning his bread in a small office in London.

Many of the poor people did well in their new home. Among their descendants are the stalwart sugar-porters of Greenock; and numbers of the young clerks whose names figure in the H. L. L. R. meetings

in Glasgow are the grandsons of those who left Skye at this sad time. The agitators tell them they were driven out by wicked landlords, and many believe it; but it was not the case in Skye at that time, at all events. Though a Highlander always retains a warm affection for his old home, and often takes a run to see his friends, he seldom returns to settle there. A Skye woman, who was comfortably married to a Greenock-born Highlander, was asked whether she would not like to return to her native village. "Och, wad I go home to be carrying peats on my back from the hull? No! no!"

The agitators have done their work very cleverly. To show how well they have educated the people in Communism, here is an extract from the 'Inverness Courier,' March 26, reporting what passed at a H. L. L. R. meeting, on Major Fraser's property:—

"Mr R. Macdonald, cottar, Staffin, strongly advised them not to pay any rent, suppose they could do it, till all would get justice. If they have anything to spare of the produce of their labour, let them give it to the poor and needy. God never commanded them to keep up an idler like Major Fraser in luxury. If he bought the estate, that did not do any good to you. He did not improve land or houses; he only gave it to another man, who had no right to sell your labour. Mr H. Matheson, Stenscholl, advised giving an honourable eviction to the long-standing landowner Government, and get in office and power honest gentlemen who would restore our national land-laws and rights, and would realise the sound and Scriptural views of the Land Restoration League. (A voice—'Nothing else will satisfy us.')

Besides the constant circulation of the 'Oban Times' and the pamphlets of the Land Restoration League, the country has

been flooded with anti-landlord literature, both in Gaelic and English; and knowing the religious feelings of the people, the Old Testament has been ransacked for texts supposed to bear on the present situation. 'The Jubilee of the Gael' is in every house, which says that the land-laws of Moses should be enforced; that land that had been alienated should be restored every fifty years; and that the Highland jubilee is at hand.

"'To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less' (Numbers xxvi.)—Not a landlord in this country pays the least attention to this. According to these rules, there could not be a division as there is here—some possessing large and valuable inheritances, and much the larger number without a bit of land at all. God made this law of returning the land as an answer beforehand to the prayer of Agur. There is no wickedness in the world so great as our land-laws, and no wonder that we have warning after warning from God against them."

Then comes the story of Ahab and Jezebel, who, of course, represent the landlords of hundreds of Naboths. The paper goes on—

"Here you have king, queen, and nobles. Yet we see the Lord opening His mouth against them, and without doubt they are just the same who are doing the greatest harm in this land. Their greatness did not shelter them from the voice of the Lord, nor from the hands of the men who were sent to take vengeance. We have more cause thirty times over than Elijah to open our mouths, and to raise our voices high against the nobles and the rulers who are treading the bodies and souls of the people beneath their feet."

In the course of the exhaustive inquiry we have lately made, we look in vain for these rulers. On the contrary, we hear of the large

sums of money expended and the deep interest taken by Lady Gordon Cathcart in the welfare of the people, by the late Sir James Matheson, by the late Sir Edward Scott, and many others. The Communists tell the people that the land-law of Moses is the foundation of all law, and that it is to be restored. So little do some of them know, that they think that Moses lived not so very long ago—perhaps 200 years—and somehow or other the wicked landlords reversed his laws, and took their lands. They entirely ignore the nations and their history which have lived since Moses. They never heard of them. They read the Bible, and they are quite aware of what goes on now; but all between is a blank in their minds. The rebellion of the world against the land-laws of Moses seems to them a late event, and they think it should be put down as soon as possible. Deer-forests have been a fruitful source of heart-burning, and in some cases they have been quite indefensible. But there are no deer-forests in Skye except a small one of Lord Macdonald's, among the peaks of the Coolins. There is not a deer between the Coolins and Ru Hunish, nor between Carbost and Dunvegan Head.

The partisans of the crofter are very numerous in London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and nine-tenths of them honestly and very naturally believe the stories they have heard, because for many years these stories have been industriously circulated by 'The Highlander' and other papers, and by persons who have an interest in doing so; and they were often left uncontradicted by those who knew better, because they were thought too absurd to be believed.

Even granting that very harsh things were done when the large sheep-farms were formed, from fifty to eighty years ago, these stories should be received with caution, for, as I said before, John Macpherson stated publicly that he had seen what he certainly did not see; and before the Commission we read how the editor of the 'Celtic Magazine' made statements seriously reflecting on Dr Mackenzie's treatment of the Gairloch people,—statements which, if true, would have been most disgraceful, but which were completely disproved by Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, and the editor was obliged to give as his excuse that he was only twelve years old at the time, and had merely repeated the gossip he had heard. Many benevolent persons, ladies especially, echo the cry of the crofter. Professor Blackie writes sentimentally on the subject. Every little clerk ambitious of notoriety writes in the newspapers, and speaks at the Highland meetings in Glasgow or elsewhere of the wrongs of his beloved country, and he is delighted to see his name in the 'Oban Times.' The Land League pays the agitators so handsomely, that every little village orator aspires to the profession of lecturer as a step towards greatness and M.P.-ship. The more he misrepresents and abuses all landlords, the more he is appreciated. It is laughable, though very sad, to see the small ambitions that this state of excitement has brought forth. One man gives up his carpentership, and starts in the race for fame. Two fishermen leave their boats, and, taking as their text paragraphs in the 'Oban Times,' talk eloquently to their neighbours. A crofter at Uig is called Gladstone, another repre-

sents Parnell, and their harangues are eagerly listened to at the Land League village meeting. Then comes the glory of reading their speeches in the newspapers. Fame is certain and fortune probable, for "has not John Macpherson got £50 a-year and all his expenses paid by the kind gentlemen, and will they not do as much for us whatever?"

It has been a great time for the local agitators, and for their connections settled in London, Liverpool, and other large towns. They diligently attend every Highland meeting, they pose as the warm friends of the crofter, they repeat the current stories, they are looked up to as authorities on the subject, and manage to make themselves very conspicuous indeed. Some have even attained a position to which in their wildest youthful dreams they had not aspired.

As to John Macpherson, he is the greatest man in the Highlands. He is the chosen friend of the renowned Henry George, with whom he travels, and whose views he expounds in Gaelic to excited gatherings. When he goes to Glasgow or Edinburgh, crowds assemble and hang on every word from his lips. One lady sends him a sword with an adulatory letter; another visits him, and tells him he is to be the hero of her next novel. The Rev. D. McCallum, very lately a poor minister of the Established Church, without a congregation at all, or a very small one, starts also in the race for fame, and by preaching the tenets of the Land Restoration League, and those of rank Communism, has obtained a high position in crofter circles.

Is it not then true that this commotion is the work of a few individuals influenced by ambition

and vanity, acting under the guidance of crafty revolutionists in London, Ireland, and America?

What may have indirectly led to the present state of affairs is the fact that there is not what can be called a middle class in the country. The farms are so extensive, that there are very few large sheep-farmers, and of those few, some are absentees. They rank with the smaller proprietors, and are not unfrequently proprietors themselves. These gentlemen are generally kindly disposed towards the people; but they are too high above them—the two classes are too far apart to have any real sympathy with each other. They sometimes do not speak the same language, and they seldom attend the same church.

The people could not have been led away by stranger agitators, had their trusted superiors and hereditary friends the old tacksmen been still at hand. A numerous, educated, and influential middle class, such as there once was, might have saved the country from the invasion of lawless Communism.

I earnestly hope that landlords will give hill-pasture to those crofters who are able to possess three or four cows. It would enable them to keep a few sheep, and would add much to the comfort of the families. As to those who have one cow only, and who have been in the habit of going to the Lowlands for work for a considerable part of the year, I doubt whether giving more land would be a boon. They are not likely to give up their periodical visit to the South, for it pays them well. The consequence would be that the land would become neglected, as it is at present. Every spring they scratch it with the *cas chrom*, instead of trenching it properly. They manure it

badly, and are obliged to hurry off to their Lowland work. I believe that if they kept their land as pasture for their one cow, reserving a bit for turnips for winter use and potatoes for themselves, and entirely gave up raising corn (as they can buy meal much cheaper than they can grow it), that they would be a comfortable people,—more comfortable than the richer crofters, for these must often expect to see their crops ruined by the variable climate; more comfortable far than the ordinary English labourer, who never has a cow, and can seldom obtain milk for his children. Let him consider his cottage and plot of ground merely as a *pied-à-terre*, and depend entirely on his work. But will any one in the present state of things be content with a position superior to that of the English labourer? Certainly not. He has been taught to expect a new order of affairs—the Jubilee of the Gael is at hand, the land-law of Moses is to be re-established; the landlords and all

the middle class are to be driven away—that is, all the culture of the country—and the land is to be given rent-free to the people, to become one dead level of crofterdom. John Macpherson, Rev. D. M'Callum, &c., tell them this will take place very soon. Even the children sing the old song of “Ho ro Morag,” with the new Gaelic words—

“The landlords are going, Ho ro,
We shall have the land, Ho ro Morag.”

Who can blame the people? They naturally believe what their superiors in station tell them, especially when the news is so agreeable to the selfishness of human nature. In conclusion, may I venture to ask the crofter sympathisers to pause for a little and consider whether it is wise to encourage an excitable race in dreams which cannot be realised, unless, indeed, as the agitators say, a social revolution and the horrors of civil war are at hand.

Perhaps they are—who knows!

AN UNKNOWN COLONY.

IN spite of the increase of tourists and the multiplication of books of travel, it is astonishing how little we know of the British Empire. Yet, after all, the explanation is simple. The "literary globe-trotter" sticks to the high-ways of international traffic, seldom severing his communications with some cosmopolitan centre, where he is pretty sure of finding his luxuries or comforts. While, on the other hand, we have the few adventurous travellers, who are tempted by the very hardships of inhospitable regions,—like Ruxton, who had the luck to carry his scalp safe through the Comanché war-trails, in his daring ride through New Mexico to the head-waters of the Missouri; like Speke and Grant, when they went groping across the Dark Continent, in their adventurous search for the sources of the Nile. Meantime important colonies with a considerable future may be neglected, simply because they lie aside from familiar paths, though they have everything that should attract the admirers of the picturesque. Here we have Newfoundland, for example, which Captain Kennedy can hardly claim to have discovered, since it is sighted by all the steamers bound for our North American ports. But he may boast of having written a book which is a revelation—which is full of fresh and dramatic descriptions of scenes and people seldom or never visited by educated strangers. He has explored the lonely shores of the colony as none but naval officers have opportunity of doing: and no

one of his predecessors on the Newfoundland station happens to have written the very interesting story before. Few, indeed, could have collected similar materials; for Captain Kennedy, an indefatigable deer-stalker and fisherman, has penetrated the innermost recesses of a very Paradise of sport. While in the way of his duties as naval commander and magistrate *ex officio*, he visited repeatedly the scattered groups of colonists along the coasts, who, being left by the Government almost entirely to their own devices, must have a desperate struggle at the best of times to keep body and soul together. So he tells us of many a wild sporting incident by flood and fell; of long days passed in the trackless forests, in "the barrens," and in camp, in company of the Canadian woodsmen and Indian hunters; and of the more thrilling dangers of the doubtful navigation among the fogs and precipices of those iron-bound shores. He was the first Englishman who had the good fortune to explore some of the finest river scenery in the Canadian Dominion, where the streams, rushing swiftly seaward through the dense pine-forests, fling themselves down the water-worn staircases in the living rock. While, being in "the Commission of the Peace," it was his business to settle a multitude of trivial disputes between quarrelsome neighbours; and as commodore he had to occupy himself with the troublesome international questions which weigh heavily on the prosperity and prospects of the colony.

As for the political history of Newfoundland, it is both curious and instructive. Neither the soil nor the climate offered great temptations to settlers, when the whole of the rich North American continent was to be reclaimed from the tribes of roving Indians. But the valuable fisheries on the famous "Banks" have always been a bone of contention, and apparently, so far back as the 16th century, they were fished indifferently by the English, the French, and the Portuguese. The Portuguese, as the spirit of adventure died out in them, were soon sent to the wall; but since the first settlements of the French and English, about 1620, the two nations have been in constant antagonism. Many of the bays and capes still bear the old French names, ludicrously corrupted into vulgar English. Thus *Rencontre* is now Round Counter; *Baie-du-Lievre* is Bay de Liver; and by undoubtedly the most ludicrous travesty of all, the *Bay des Espoirs* is become the Bay of Despair. "So late as the year 1713," we are told, "it was a question whether the island belonged to England or to France, both countries laying claim to it." Now, in virtue of complicated treaty arrangements, the French have concurrent rights of fishing with us off the western and north-eastern shores. But the essential article of the agreement is worded with a latitude most ingeniously devised, so as to give occasion for perpetual disputes. It was stipulated that British fishermen should have the right to fish everywhere, *concurrently* with the French, *provided that they do not interfere with them*.

"It is quite impossible, whatever may be said to the contrary, for two people to fish in the same water without one being able to claim, however

unjustly, that the other is interfering with him. For instance, a Newfoundlander sets his nets in the open sea; if he catches fish, a Frenchman comes along, sets his net, and says the Newfoundlander is interfering with him. This is constantly done; and as the law now stands, the wretched Newfoundlander, who lives upon the spot, has to make way for the foreigner, who comes out for his own benefit, pays no taxes, and takes away his earnings to his own country."

As may be imagined, the results of this confusion of claims and jurisdictions are deplorable, and even dangerous. When the French and English naval commandants come together officially, each is provided with a standing supply of grievances and counter-grievances. And it is clear that if the French Government cared to have a *casus belli* at any time, an intelligent captain could find the occasion for it in a squabble over some salmon barrels or a cargo of cod.

That standing danger is a serious consideration. But although the French officials have hitherto behaved with discretion and moderation, their *protégés* have been playing the dogs-in-the-manger everywhere. The men in the French fishing-fleets muster from 3000 to 6000 annually, yet there is room enough in these seas both for them and the Newfoundlanders. But French squatters have been scattering themselves along the coasts, off which they are entitled to exercise the right of fishing. And claiming the protection of their flag, they resent the "intrusion" of any English or colonial speculators. Intrusion is invariably construed into "interference." Naturally, no Englishman or English colonist, with any capital, will care to risk it, without the Government guarantee of land tenure, which he cannot obtain; while Frenchmen, who have no legal rights on

the land, stretch their nets across mouths of the salmon-streams. Curing establishments have been either shut up, or else are carried on in the teeth of perpetual troubles; the working of promising mines has been abandoned; and, above all, the scheme of a railway, which would have been of inestimable benefit in opening up the island, fell through at the last moment, owing to French opposition. It is sincerely to be hoped, for the sake of all concerned, that so anomalous a state of things may be brought to a speedy termination.

But the presence of the French on those coasts is by no means an unmixed evil, and many of our forlorn settlers have good reason to be grateful to the foreigners. Their war-cruisers are liberal of assistance to fellow-creatures who are too often reduced to dire extremities. Captain Kennedy gives a most striking picture of some of the dreary and solitary existences he lost no opportunity of brightening. The great island of Newfoundland has, roughly speaking, a circumference of 1200 miles. But that long distance is immensely increased by the innumerable bays and creeks which everywhere break into the outline. There are no roads, except in the neighbourhood of the capital: elsewhere there are absolutely no means of communication except by sea. The fishing-boats can never venture far from land; the visits of small coasting steamers are few and far between; and many outlying settlers would be almost utterly cut off from their kind, were it not for the regular calls of the naval cruisers. In the market for their fish they are at the mercy of the buyers; a bad fishing-season may bring them in any case to the brink of starvation; and should they succeed in raising a precarious

crop from some narrow strip of cultivated land, they have no certain means of selling the surplus produce. As for money, they seldom see it. Everywhere, when they are in the employment of others, the worst tyranny of the truck system is carried to excess. When paid for fish or for labour, as the case may be, the price of their necessities or poor luxuries is deducted, at any valuation it may please the employer to fix. They are born, they live, and they die, without any assistance from doctors, unless some passing ship should happen to look in; and spiritual ministrations are at least as precarious. Occasionally a virulent epidemic makes wild work with them; and the next visitor who gropes his way up some half-forgotten creek, running the gauntlet of the fogs, the reefs, and the shallows, may land in a village that is literally deserted. "Truly a lonely life," says Captain Kennedy, speaking of the people at the telegraph station in White Bear Bay, where "the only living creatures are the operator and his family, with one telegraph repairer." Yet the telegraph folks, being of course in receipt of regular pay, ought to have been comparatively well off. As to the general destitution along those bleak and storm-beaten coasts, we cannot do better than quote his report on it:—

"On our visits round the island, we met with sights enough to sicken us, and make us ashamed to think that these poor creatures were British subjects like ourselves. On many parts of Labrador, the west coast of Newfoundland, and on parts of the north-east coast, the people are starving every winter, though it is the custom in St John's to laugh at these reports as gross exaggerations. I can only say that we have seen this state of things repeatedly: any one who has

followed our cruise round the coast cannot fail to have remarked it; but as long as everything is sacrificed to the fishing, and these dogs permitted, there is no help for it. But for these brutal dogs, sheep-farming might be encouraged, and the women taught to spin and weave the wool, to make clothes for themselves and their little ones, as they do in the Highlands of Scotland, instead of going about in that climate scantily clothed, and their wretched children half naked, because they are too poor to buy any clothes, or the material to make them. These poor creatures used to flock on board to see the doctor at every port, asking for medicines, when it was patent to all that what they wanted was nourishing food and warm clothing."

The dogs, referred to as one of the worst scourges of the farmer, are sprung from domestic animals run wild, which increase and multiply and hunt the country in packs. An enterprising Canadian settler had complained to Captain Kennedy that, though he had enclosed land and gone in for sheep-raising, his attempts were being baffled by those "wolfish curs." Apparently, some one is still supposed to have rights of property in them, for the settler had to ask the Captain as a magistrate for permission to destroy them. The leave was given; ninety-two dogs were speedily bagged; yet the settler was still enjoying as good sport as ever. Of course, with the increase of population, and the opening of communications between the settlements, some of the most serious drawbacks to successful farming would disappear. Hitherto everything has been sacrificed to the sea-fishing, and the most pleasing and fertile locations have been neglected. To the sea-fishing Captain Kennedy only alludes incidentally; but what he does say on the subject is shrewd, and of great interest. "The cod is the only fish recognised in Newfound-

land as of any value, except perhaps the halibut. All others are looked upon merely as bait, or for manuring the ground. I have even known trout of 3 and 4 lb. weight cut up as bait for cod; and the man that told me this was not a bit ashamed of himself." Until recently, the Newfoundland fish had almost a monopoly of the markets in Spain, Brazil, and the West Indies, among the devout Roman Catholics and the negroes, both of them indefatigable consumers of the salted cod or "*baccalao*." Latterly the Norwegian and Icelandic curers have been coming to the front. "There is no fear, however," Captain Kennedy goes on to say, "but that the Newfoundland cod will always hold its own in market value." "The bank fishery on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador is probably equal to that of all the rest of the world put together; and when it is estimated that a cod's roe contains from 4 to 9 million eggs, there is little fear of this fish being exterminated." As for the still more prolific herrings—

"They are frequently barred in any of the numerous estuaries along the coast, such as Long Harbour, by enclosing them in long, deep nets, and kept in this manner until vessels arrive to take them away. This method is illegal, and very properly so, as many millions die of starvation or suffocation, and sink to the bottom. I have heard of the bottom of the sea being covered with dead herrings to the depth of 16 feet. Even with our small service seine, we have taken 60,000 herrings at a single haul."

Personally, Captain Kennedy takes slight interest in the sea-fish. But into the salmon and the trout fishing he throws his whole heart and soul; and he narrates his experiences on the Newfoundland rivers with as much frankness as

freshness. He warns sanguine fishermen that they will probably be disappointed. It is not that salmon do not swarm up the streams, everywhere and always when they have fair play. But, in the first place, they seldom do have fair play; in the second place, they are shy of rising to the fly. "The whole of the fine salmon-rivers are ruined by barring, sweeping with nets, traps, weirs, or mill-dams, in defiance of all laws and proclamations, till the wretched fish are almost exterminated." There are three modes of barring by nets, and all of them very deadly. By two of these the fish are almost inevitably trapped; by the third they are absolutely prevented from passing, and probably hung up by their heads in the meshes. No one of his official duties was carried out with greater energy than that of forcing the obstructive barricades, and making prize of the valuable nets. The only way to circumvent the enemy was to take him by surprise; for if a cruiser was sighted on the coast, the nets were immediately secreted. The ship would lie off some miles from the river-mouth; a boat that was lowered in the darkness pulled in towards the land with the day-break, and when the poachers had warning of the intended descent, it was too late to save their property. Captain Kennedy narrates some of those incidents with lively satisfaction, for undoubtedly he and his boat's crew on the whole had the best of the joke, although he had to put up with the loss of his rod-fishing. Making the mouth of "a lovely salmon-river in Bonne Bay," they sighted a boat with a man in it, pulling up the river. He was speedily overhauled by the Druid's steam-launch, hailed with a cheery "Good morning," and asked as to the chances of sport.

His replies were by no means reassuring. There had not been a fish in the river for many years, and in his opinion it was no use putting up a rod. Then he sculled swiftly ashore and vanished in the bush, while the launch proceeded up the river.

"We had not gone a mile further before a sight met us enough to make any true angler collapse. Right across the river, from bank to bank, staked high above the water, was a splendid net, and suspended in the meshes, just as the water had left them, were several salmon and some noble trout, of 3 and 4 lb. weight. Above this net were three others, all containing fish, and above that again—not a living thing, and no wonder."

These unlooked-for descents did a great deal of good, by spreading dismay far and wide among the speculators, who sunk considerable sums of money in their nets. And within a year of clearing the mouth of a river of the obstructions, Captain Kennedy found the pools full of grilse and salmon. But even then there were more than the ordinary odds against the angler, for Newfoundland salmon, as we said, are slow to take the fly. His theory is that they want education, and hitherto their education has been almost absolutely neglected. Yet the tales of one or two of his lucky days are almost enough to tempt sportsmen who have found European rivers over-fished, to try the chances of the Newfoundland trip. One day, in company with a boy of eleven, the joint bag of trout scaled 98 lb., and all of these were killed in the course of four hours; while on another occasion he had still finer sport with the grilse, though, owing to natural and artificial obstructions in the stream, the successes were checked by a series of disappointments. He tells the story, and sketches

the scenery with much spirit. He had sought a singularly romantic spot beneath some picturesque falls on a salmon-river called the Indian Brook. He was poled up the stream by a couple of Indians in a canoe.

"A mass of logs, many of large size, had formed a jam at the falls, completely blocking the passage, and raising the water several feet, thus preventing any fish from ascending. The foaming torrent poured over and through these logs with a deafening roar. Close below the fall was a deep still pool, in which the water glided silently to some rapids below; at the lower part of this pool was another jam of logs,—the heavy spars were thrown about in every possible position like spillicans. Stepping out upon the rocks overhanging the silent pool, I dropped my fly lightly upon the water. Instantly there was a gleam like silver out of the depths, the line tautened,—a fresh-run grilse sprang out of the water, was all over the pool,—and in three minutes he was cleverly netted by one of the Indians, and lay gasping on the bank. After a short spell to rest the pool and enjoy a cup of coffee and a cigar, I took up my rod again, and hooked another grilse with the third cast, which, after several leaps, went over the fall below, and was landed lower down. A few more throws, and I was fast in another; this one also went over the falls, but left my fly sticking in a log; and the next one served me the same way. A fifth landed on the logs in his first jump, and we parted company. After this I had no more luck, although I rose and hooked several more: they all went over the falls or hung me up in the logs, in spite of all I could do to prevent them. Had it not been for these logs, I must have had at least a dozen of them, for they took the fly well, and were all fair hooked."

The disappointments were vexatious, no doubt, yet we can hardly imagine a more delightful day's sport; and we really think the Captain was ungrateful for his

mercies, when he returned to his ship "not over-satisfied." But his expeditions in search of scenery were almost invariably richly rewarded; while in some of them he unveiled the virgin beauties of wild nature in a waste of wood and waters that had hitherto been unexplored. The most picturesque of his discoveries was the Grand Falls on the Exploits river, which may some day have their setting of Grand Hotels like Niagara, and be included in Mr Cook's circular American tours. The ascent of the rapidly running river, which is nearly a mile in width at the mouth, promised at first comparatively little. The banks were somewhat tame, and axes had been busy among the woods. But it soon became hard work paddling the canoes against the broken current, and foaming rapids succeeded to swift rushes, till they were brought up by the Bishop's Fall. Nor was the romantic voyage without its disagreeables.

"Returning to our camp, we found the tent pitched, fire lighted, and tea ready, and we looked forward to refreshment and repose; but alas! there was none of it, for the black flies were masters of the situation. They were in millions, and attacked us from all quarters, notwithstanding repeated applications of tar and oil, until we had to take refuge in the smoke of our fire, where we passed a miserable time, with our eyes running with water, mingled with grease and tar. We endeavoured in vain to make ourselves comfortable for the night; but the flies got into our eyes, ears, and mouth, mingled with our food and tea, and generally made our lives a burden to us. Darkness set in, and we flattered ourselves we should have peace; but there was no peace for the wicked. The flies disappeared, but the mosquitoes took their place. The tent was stiflingly hot, and we tried to sleep outside; but it was all the same, for no sleep was to be had."

Those flies and mosquitoes, as we know full well, are the curse of the pleasure-seeker in northern latitudes. But a plunge in the cold river worked marvels next morning, with the fresh breezes breathing balm and resin from the pine-trees. The party carried their canoes round the rocks, to launch them again above the rapids, poling or paddling onwards, through scenery that was ever growing grander. Seals, with their little ones, were playing among the cliffs, taking headers into the water when scared by the splash of the paddles. Where the scenery was at its wildest, they struck a trail through the woods, cutting across a great loop of the river.

"We now approached the Grand Falls, the roar of which we could plainly hear. Occasionally glimpses of the river far beneath us could be had through the trees, showing a mass of foaming, eddying water dashing between precipitous banks on either hand. Guided by the ear, we now scrambled through the bush, and presently found ourselves in sight of the Falls, when a glorious view presented itself. I must confess that we were prepared for a disappointment, after many of like nature in this and other countries; but the scene before us fully answered, if it did not exceed, our expectations. Looking upwards to the right was a roaring torrent broken by the black rocks, whose heads could now and then be seen. Abreast of where we stood the stream was divided by a thickly wooded islet, whereon thousands of gulls had built their nests: the parent birds flew round with loud discordant cries, adding in the roar of the waterfall to the weirdness of the scene. Below the islet the waters met, and, wedged in by precipitous rocks on either side, plunged in a succession of cascades into the seething caldron beneath."

The shooting in Newfoundland is more satisfactory than the fishing; and the caribou-stalking must be really noble sport, and merely a

question of money to those who have not the exceptional good-fortune to go yachting at Government expense. To penetrate the seldom-trodden shooting-grounds of the interior, it is necessary not only to charter your own vessel, if you desire to keep communications with civilisation open, but you must be provided with a tent, with boats or canoes, and, carrying with you sufficient stores for the trip, must engage skilled backwoodsmen as pioneers, and Indian hunters for stalkers. As for the shooting, though grouse are tolerably plentiful, we should fancy no one would dream of going to Newfoundland for grouse-shooting. The walking is invariably stiff, and the birds are scattered at haphazard about the country. You must have a good and well-broken dog to find them, and then they are as hard to be flushed as the broods of young black-game in the beginning of September. But the caribou is king of the Newfoundland uplands, and one of the grand old stags, with his spreading antlers, will repay any amount of exertion. Captain Kennedy describes the caribou as a gigantic goat. He stands lower than the red-deer, but weighs much more heavily. Taking a good red-deer stag at twenty stone, a fine specimen of the caribou would scale half as much again. As for the antlers, they are magnificent trophies. "The antlers of the caribou stag are palmated, sweeping backwards at first, and then forwards, and of magnificent proportions,—the brow-antlers sometimes meeting over the nose like a pair of hands clasped in the attitude of prayer." On the whole, and considering the character of the country, the caribou is by no means difficult of approach. He seems to trust almost

entirely to his exquisite sensibility of scent, and he is neither quick of sight nor keen of hearing. Smelling the track of the sportsman will give him the alarm, and send him shambling across the "barrens," with his long and swift though lumbering gallop; but he is slow to be scared by sounds, and will actually come down upon a rifle in the open. In fact, although, like all deer, he is timid before unknown dangers, he is almost aggressively courageous, especially in the rutting season. Then it is the practice of the Indians to "tole" up the stag by imitating the call of a rival. The stag dashes out of the covert in answer to the challenge, and will even charge a man when he has discovered his blunder. Consequently, fierce battles between the deer themselves are of no unusual occurrence, and Captain Kennedy had the good fortune to witness one of these, which, we should say, is unprecedented in the annals of sport, so far as the romantic circumstances went. Through blinding snow-drift they had distinguished the two sultans—one of them accompanied by a single hind, the other at the head of a numerous seraglio, on which his rival had been casting envious eyes. Captain Kennedy's Indian attendant had "toled," but neither stag paid any attention. The thoughts of both were concentrated on the coming combat. "A moment later, and a crash as of a tree falling resounded through the valley, as the two stags' heads met in the arena." The odd thing was, that the sportsmen had come full upon the group of hinds, when

to witness as pretty a fight as ever man beheld. . . . There, amidst the blinding snow, were the two monarchs of the glen, their heads down, backs arched, horns crashing, turf flying, struggling, writhing, and pushing for the mastery. The hinds, for whom the battle was raging, assembled themselves round to see fair-play; and we stood and watched the conflict from ten yards' distance."

The gallant struggle was abruptly terminated by Captain Kennedy and his companion dropping the combatants to a simultaneous discharge. For crack shots, under skilled guidance, the sport must be excellent; and on one occasion, Captain Kennedy and his friends had six deer lying out around the encampment, to be fetched home by the camp-followers. Then the excitement of following up the caribou to his least accessible retreats is heightened by the wild grandeur of the scenery. Happily waterways lead up towards the least frequented of the forest sanctuaries, which would be unapproachable had a way to be hewn through the bush. On one excursion, with *portages* over the intervening necks of land, Captain Kennedy followed a chain of lakes, each from 20 to 60 miles in length, and when the hunters had scaled the heights frequented by the ptarmigan, the eye ranged over a wide wilderness of scenery, somewhat resembling a Scottish deer-forest, though richly wooded. Standing on one of the mountaintops when the dense mist lifted, Captain Kennedy looked around him on a varied panorama, extending for some fifty miles in every direction:—

"The hinds ran also—not away from us, but with us; and the extraordinary sight might have been seen of three men and some sixteen or seventeen hinds all mixed up together

"Far as the eye could reach were mountains and valleys, lakes, woods, and rocks. . . . Near us were marshes, ponds, and scattered clumps of wood, a very sanctuary for deer and beaver, and a glorious prospect

for a deer-stalker; not a soul or a human habitation to be seen, nor a sound heard except the crow of the old grouse-cock, or the more distant cry of the loon."

For the beaver is still to be found in these solitudes, sociably gathered together in hard-working communities; and the bear may be met with now and again, although, as a rule, he keeps himself modestly in the background. *Apropos* to the bears, Captain Kennedy tells a very amusing story. He had gone ashore with his coxswain to look for geese; the coxswain pulled off his boots to walk barefooted, and the pair had left a well-marked trail along the sandy beach.

"It is a well-known fact that a bear's trail closely resembles that of a man, and may be easily mistaken for it. It seemed evident that the unfortunate skipper was being tracked by the ferocious and bloodthirsty animal, and the officers gallantly gave chase, in hopes of slaying the bear before he had made a meal of the captain. After following the track for some time, it became apparent that the skipper and the bear had sat down and made a friendly meal together, so the officers returned on board, and I am afraid got well chaffed for their trouble."

But we must not bid farewell to the camps on the caribou-grounds without quoting one of those incidents of the day's stalking which Captain Kennedy hits off so pleasantly, with his easy and humorous touch:—

"We counted seventeen or eighteen of them, in charge of a monster which loomed as big as a bullock, and carried a magnificent head. The deer were travelling diagonally towards us, down wind, so that by running as hard as we could for half a mile we were able to intercept their path, and had barely time to drop behind some low junipers before the leading hinds were upon us. It was an exciting moment

as the graceful animals passed our ambush in twos and threes, some of them not more than five yards off, and none more than twenty. As they crossed our track, they winded it, jumped over, and, passing on, assembled themselves in our rear. . . . Joe was greatly excited, and kept whispering in my ear, 'Take that one, sir; she got five inches of fat!' but I was deaf to his remarks, and kept my gun at half-cock; for I could hear the old bull grunting in rear of his harem. Presently his brow-antlers appeared—what a moment for a deer-stalker!—then his head and enormous neck—and what a pair of horns!—and then his huge carcass came in full view. Joe gave a grunt, the old brute stopped; and at that instant the heavy ounce-ball crashed in behind his shoulder, the poor brute gave a prodigious bound, clearing fifteen feet, as we afterwards measured, and then laid out at full gallop. . . . It mattered not; the gallant beast, going like a race-horse, but dying all the way, made straight for a lake, some 400 yards away, and, plunging in, rolled over dead. . . . His horns stuck up out of the water like a branch of a tree. After a good deal of trouble we got him ashore, and surveyed his noble proportions. 'He very ole stag,' said Joe: 'about ten year ole, and weigh over 500 lb.' But, by Jove, what a head!—forty-two points, as I'm a sinner! with the pal-mated brow-antlers interlocked across his nose, like a pair of clasped hands, his huge bull-neck and shoulders bearing many a scar, gained in defence of his seraglio. I named him 'Brigham Young' on the spot, out of compliment to the Mormon elder."

Captain Kennedy's reports of his magisterial decisions are droll enough; and, what was much to the purpose, the litigants seem to have been generally satisfied with his system of rough-and-ready justice. Once, when he was wading waist-deep in the Forteau river, and industriously throwing his flies, an old settler came up to the bank, brimful of complaints against a servant-girl.

"Mr B. (at the top of his voice). 'Serious charge to make, sir. Servant-gal—'

"Well, tell us all about it. What's her name? State the case."

"Well, sir, you'd hardly believe it when I tell you that the gal—"

"By Jove, a rise! I have him! Run down and put the net under that fish. Thanks. What a beauty! You were saying that—"

So the investigation of the case went on, complainant being called upon to use the cleek or the landing-net at intervals, till the judge began to lose patience at the interruptions to the sport, and politely dismissed the plaintiff:—

"Shameful! So it is, Mr B.; but pressure of business prevents me from investigating the case any further at present—so bring the parties on board the Druid to-morrow morning. Good day."

Another of his *causes célèbres* was a case of arson.

"A man at Trout river told me that his house had been burnt down, he had reason to believe, by three brothers; but he could not swear to it, not having seen them do it. Summoned all the parties to appear on board the Druid. . . . Placed them all under the sentry's charge, while a consultation was held; then called in one, whom we will call A. Worked upon A.'s feelings by informing him that if the case came before the Supreme Court he would probably be hanged; whereupon A. confessed having assisted to set fire to the house. Dismissed A. and put him under the sentry's charge separately, and had in B. Told B. that A. had turned Queen's evidence. B. then confessed. Put him under the sentry's charge, and had in C., who thereupon made a clean breast of it. Ordered the three brothers to pay ten dollars apiece and rebuild the house. All the parties signed a paper agreeing to this decision, and left the ship together. When we came by the next year, all four were living together in the same house in perfect harmony."

We have cast a glimpse over the landscapes in the interior, with their scrub and their broad "barrens," their lakes and their clumps of noble timber. And the scenery on the coast must often be sternly magnificent, where bays, fiords, and creeks,—call them what we will,—go winding inland beneath beetling precipices; where the clear salmon-streams come rushing down, flinging themselves over ledges of rock, between thickets of natural shrubbery matted under the pines. But we cannot say that Captain Kennedy has convinced us of the charms of the climate; though he does declare, in his opening chapter, that it is "second to none in point of salubrity." Salubrious it may be, and pleasant enough for the two or three summer months; but through great part of the year, it must be the very abomination of disheartening desolation. Fogs that last for weeks, with dripping rain, are of no unfrequent occurrence; and, as he remarks, "these fogs are terribly depressing, besides being most dangerous." And of the dangers he came to know a great deal, since the Druid had often to grope her way into unknown harbours, by the hoarse screams of her steam-whistles, echoed back through the darkness from the invisible cliffs. Then the drift of icebergs from the frozen seas round the Pole bring down the low spring temperature; and when the summer sun begins to shine warmly on the frozen and saturated soil, the glaciers are half-veiled in the rising vapours. So that, though Newfoundland may have its attractions, it is an agreeable transition to ship in the Druid for winter cruising in the tropics, among the sunny isles of the

West Indies with their tropical foliage.

Seven times did Captain Kennedy come to an anchorage at the Bermudas, and he ought to know something about them. Bermudians, in a blissful state of self-contentment, profess to revel in an earthly paradise; while naval and military officers have brought up evil reports of the islands, pronouncing them "one of the most monotonous places under heaven." The truth, as may be imagined, lies between those extremes. The islands are very beautiful, yet life there may be abominably dull.

"The approach from seaward is certainly very lovely, and the pleasing impression remains after one has skirted the reefs at the entrance and come to an anchor inside. The first thing that attracts the eye of a new-comer is the wonderful clearness and lovely colouring of the water, a pale greenish blue, and the beautiful whiteness of the coral strand. The water is so clear that the reefs are plainly visible, and it would be possible for even a stranger to thread his way between them in a clear day. . . . The contrast between the snowy-white houses and the dark foliage of the juniper cedar is especially beautiful and refreshing to the eye, wearied by the monotony of gazing on the sea for several days previously. . . . For those fond of yachting and boat-sailing, or sea-fishing, Bermuda presents unusual attractions. The sky is of the bluest; the water a lovely emerald-green, revealing in its depths wonderful corals, sponges, shells, and seaweeds, with many kinds of brilliantly marked fish swimming about their rocky home."

As a fortress, Bermuda is of the first importance. It is situated almost exactly half-way between the northern and the southern naval stations; while nature has made it practically impregnable. The only approach lies through that labyrinth of reefs and

narrow channels which Captain Kennedy has described. The local pilots are sworn to secrecy; and, what is more reassuring, by lifting buoys and laying down torpedoes, hostile vessels trying to thread the passage must come to inevitable grief. So far Bermuda may be considered safe, whatever may be the condition of the fortifications and the cannon in the batteries. Yet the universal neglect of our colonial defences is apparent in the fact that no telegraphic communication has hitherto been established with the West Indies on the one side, or with the Dominion of Canada on the other.

Jamaica has always had a bad name in the bills of mortality, notwithstanding its beauties; and we are apt to fancy the venomous germs of yellow fever to be lurking everywhere, with its snakes among its fruits and its flowers. But Captain Kennedy declares "that statistics would show that Jamaica was as healthy a place as there is on the globe, and far more so than Gibraltar or Malta, Cyprus or Halifax." Yellow fever is almost unknown and never indigenous, being brought thither from some neighbouring island, or from the mainland of South America. And he backs up his assertion by the facts that, during the three winters he knew Port Royal, there was no single case of fever; while for a whole year, in the Naval Hospital, there was no death from any cause whatever. Health, he says, is all a question of ordinary care,—and people who neglect exercise, and indulge in excesses or indiscretions, have no right to blame the climate if they suffer. And he found the same hospitality among the impoverished planters which was glorified by 'Tom Cringle,' in the golden days before emancipation, and praised

by Anthony Trollope and Charles Kingsley on their comparatively recent visits. But he cannot speak hopefully of the prospects of the friends who still strive to cherish the old kindly traditions under difficulties. Setting sugar bounties or over-competition in coffees aside, the labour question will always be at the bottom of their struggles or their bankruptcies. How is it possible to count upon plentiful labour at a reasonable rate, when two easy days of work in each week will keep the black man in comparative luxury. The picturesque charms of that "island of streams" have been its bane; and indolent negroes can never be broken to regular toil, when they have only to cut out a provision ground anywhere from a wilderness of rich and unreclaimed country. Then, the physical conditions of the districts of the island are so different, that it is impossible to generalise either on them or their productions.

"The rainfall seems to be cut off by the mountainous range in the interior, and is very unequally divided. On the south side people are often starved for want of water, while on the north they have abundance—often too much. Naturally the whole features of the country are altered: the southern slopes of the mountains have a barren and withered appearance, and the plains are parched, hot, and dusty. The north side is precisely the reverse: here may be seen tropical vegetation in all its glory, with lovely flowers, ferns, and orchids to delight the naturalist. Most of the fruit is grown on this side, and immense quantities of bananas and cocoa-nuts are shipped to the United States."

Reporting one of his quarter-deck decisions in a collision case, where the horse which had been hired by one of the Druid's seamen had been killed by the shaft of a negro's cart, Captain Kennedy,

with his lively sense of the ludicrous, quotes a characteristic bit of nautical evidence. A boatswain's mate, called in support of the defendant, is giving his version of the affair:—

"'Well, sir, all I knows is that 'Umphreys' (the man's name was Humphreys) 'was close hauled on the starboard tack, when this 'ere nigger came a-bearing down on him dead afore the wind. 'Umphreys, seeing him a-coming, puts his 'elm down to clear him, but the nigger came right athwart his bows and sunk him. By the rule of the road at sea, sir, 'Umphreys was in the right, and the nigger wrong.'"

The outlook for Jamaica may be by no means brilliant, but Captain Kennedy gives a still more depressing report of the present condition and the prospects of Cuba. It is not so long ago that the "Pearl of the Antilles" contributed largely to the revenues of the mother-country; that each successive Captain-General enriched himself quickly, and as a matter of course, with the perquisites paid ungrudgingly by prosperous sugar-growers. But the Slave Emancipation Act of five years back has ruined Cuba, as our legislation ruined Jamaica half a century before.

"The financial condition of the island is desperate. The Custom-houses are, and have been for some time, mortgaged to a very large amount. The estimated deficit for the financial year ending 30th June 1880 was calculated at 20,000,000 dollars—probably much below the mark. No taxes are collected, although the treasury is empty, as the people cannot or will not pay, and the authorities dare not make them. . . . The city of Havana is a reflex of the condition of the country—an empty treasury, mortgaged Custom-house, officials in arrears, and troops unpaid. The town is infested with adventurers of every nationality."

Cuba would seem to be drifting, through insolvency, discontent, depression, and despair, towards appropriation by American speculators, if not open annexation by the United States. But the condition of the beautiful Haiti is still more deplorable and hopeless. That magnificent island, called "the Queen of the Antilles," as Cuba was "the Pearl," and containing 30,000 square miles, is scantily populated by some 700,000 semi-savages. It has a thin fringe of semi-civilisation in the few filthy coast towns, which apes the manners, the Court ceremonial, and the armaments of great European Powers. Two-thirds of the island, with 200,000 of the inhabitants, belong to San Domingo; the remaining third, with five-sevenths of the population, is in Haiti proper. The army of Haiti, even as it exists on paper, is considerably over-officered. To a (nominal) force of 8000 troops there are allotted no less than 2000 full generals. "Whenever a general dies a salute is fired, consequently minute-guns may be heard almost every day." The numerous generals receive no pay, but are permitted to embezzle the money of their men, who, so far as they are really under the colours, must, it is to be supposed, either starve or steal for a subsistence. Consequently we are not surprised to hear that the financial condition of the country is rotten; that there is no kind of public security; and that political disturbances are of frequent occurrence. But the President, pending the next revolution that may sweep him from power, has no hesitation in dealing with the disturbers of public order. He shoots them by batches, a dozen or so at a time; and is hopeful that these sharp remedies may calm popular excitement. The rival republic of San

Domingo is administered even more frugally. There is no standing army, and consequently there are no generals, but each man arms himself as well as he can afford, and taking the law into his own hands, uses his deadly weapons on the slightest provocation.

But when we spoke of the Haitien people as semi-savages, we did them something more than justice. And we may close our notice of a fascinating book with a glance at the most sensational of its chapters. Captain Kennedy anticipates his critics, declaring, by way of preface, that he "shall neither be surprised nor offended if the reader gives me credit for a lively imagination, or at least a gross exaggeration of facts." He tells us that he has been convinced that the Haitiens are cannibals; that they practise with little affectation of secrecy the most blood-thirsty and disgusting rites; that sorcery is their religion, and a recognised institution among them; and that its festivals are celebrated by human sacrifices. Those blacks, having been brought originally from the banks of the Congo, have faithfully preserved the traditions and continued to practise the rites of their ancestors.

Haiti is nominally a Christian and Catholic country: it has an archbishop, four bishops, and 100 priests. But the Church has always been powerless against the sorcerers and serpent-worshippers; and even the President, as head of the civil power, prudently ignores their existence. On certain high days and holidays the ceremonies and orgies are known to recur periodically.

"The people are called together by beat of drum, usually at midnight. The ceremony begins by administering oaths enjoining secrecy. Dancing then commences, the excitement being

supplemented by copious libations of rum, till one or more of the wretches fall down in a fit, when the spirit of Voudoux is supposed to have entered into them. These orgies generally last three days, but often much longer. On the first night a priest sacrifices a cock at the altar, the blood being drunk warm. Dancing then recommences, and the orgies go on till the individuals are incapable of further exertions. . . . On the third night the orgies continue, when a little child is brought in: the child's throat is cut by the priest, the blood handed round and drunk warm; the body is then cut up and eaten raw, that which is not disposed of being salted for further use."

It is said that child-stealing is a regular calling among the women; that children are slaughtered annually by hundreds; and that the terror established by the heathen priests is so great, that none of the bereaved parents venture to complain. It is very conceivable that such horrors of cruelty and even cannibalism might be perpetrated in frenzies of superstitious excitement. But Captain Kennedy is of opinion that cannibalism is habitually practised in cold blood; that the negro has a natural liking for human flesh; and that unnatural mothers will provide for themselves and their children simultaneously by making a meal off their own newly-born

infants. He assures us that human flesh has openly been sold in the Haïtien markets; and that men and women have been repeatedly detected in the very act of cannibalism. On these occasions "the worthy magistrate" sends them away with a reproof and a nominal punishment. Severity had been tried and had failed. The late President had eight cannibals shot, to whom the crime had been brought home conclusively; but the only effect of that startling example was to make the practice of cannibalism more secret. Remarking that the Haïtiens have their faults, and that their tastes are certainly peculiar, Captain Kennedy sums up his observations on the country by speculating on its probable future:—

"It is difficult to conjecture what will be the future of Haïti; possibly in time to come it may be annexed by the United States or other powerful and civilised country. In the meantime, it is, I fear, destined to remain a blot on the face of the earth, a disgrace and a parody on the name of civilisation, and a monument of anarchy and misrule."

And it will be a marvel, with the present mania for promiscuous colonisation, if the Haïtiens do not find foreign masters before many years are over.

FOOTPRINTS.

ONE of the most striking incidents in the story of 'Robinson Crusoe' was his finding a strange human footprint on the beach of his lonely island. This incident excited his imagination, and opened up to him a whole world of vague possibilities. He knew that he was no longer the only dweller in his island home; and he had an uncomfortable feeling that the magic circle of his solitude might at any moment be invaded. In a similar way the imagination of the scientific man is ever and anon startled by the discovery of one of those literal "footprints on the sands of time," which have not unfrequently been left behind by the former life of the globe. There is a mystery about it which opens up a vista into a new and larger world of suggestion. The naturalist is familiar with the tracks on sandstone and other slabs, such as those found in the quarries of Dumfriesshire, which form one of the most interesting features in every geological museum. The material on which these curious relics of the past have been impressed is remarkable for the paucity of its fossil remains; but while it has allowed the substantial forms of the creatures themselves to disappear, it has carefully preserved the more shadowy and incidental memorials of their life, the mere impressions produced by their feet on the soft primeval mud. As the American savage can tell not only that an elk or a bison has passed by from the traces of its hoofs on the prairie, but also the hour when it passed by; as the Arab can determine from the camel's track in the desert whether

it was heavily or lightly laden, whether it was fresh or fatigued, lame or sound,—so the geologist can inform us, from the footmarks on the thin layer of unctuous clay between the slabs of sandstone, not only that the animal which produced them belonged to an extinct tortoise family, but also that it was walking on the beach of the sea in a westerly direction when the tide was receding. No relic of the bodies of these ancient Scottish tortoises has been discovered. But in the case of the peculiar hand-like footprints on some slab-surfaces of the same formation in England and Saxony, which attracted attention some years afterwards, a few teeth and fragments of the bones of the animal that produced them were found soon after to verify the conclusion to which naturalists had previously come—that the colossal creature was intermediate between a frog and a crocodile. In America, in a formation earlier than any in which traces of birds have been discovered in Europe, slabs have been found with footprints impressed upon them of such a nature as to indicate the existence of a bird twice the size of an ostrich. These ephemeral impressions of obscure creatures that perished untold ages ago, have been preserved as distinct as the track of the passing animal upon the recent snow, while every vestige of the course of ancient armies that ravaged the earth has disappeared.

But there is another class of footprints still more interesting and instructive, because they belong to the human world. These have been found in almost every part of the earth, cut in the solid rock, or im-

pressed upon boulders and slabs of marble and other stones. These artificial tracks have given rise to much speculation, being considered by many persons to be real impressions of human feet, dating from a time when the material on which they were stamped was still in a state of softness. Superstition has invested them with a sacred veneration, and legends of a wild and mystical character have gathered around them. The slightest acquaintance with the results of geological research has sufficed to dispel this delusion, and to show that these mysterious marks could not have been produced by human beings while the rocks were in a state of fusion; and consequently no intelligent observer now holds this theory of their origin. But superstition dies hard; and there are persons who, though confronted with the clearest evidences of science, still refuse to abandon their old obscurantist ideas. They prefer a supernatural theory that allows free scope to their fancy and religious instinct, to one that offers a more prosaic explanation. There is a charm in the mystery connected with these dim imaginings which they would not wish dispelled by the clear daylight of scientific knowledge. In our own country, footmarks on rocks and stones are by no means of unfrequent occurrence. Some of them, indeed, although associated with myths and fairy tales, have doubtless been produced by natural causes, being the mere chance effects of weathering, without any meaning except to a geologist. But there are others that have been unmistakably produced by artificial means, and have a human history and significance; and to a few of the best known and most important of these we now invite attention.

In Scotland Tanist stones—so

called from the Gaelic word *tan-aiste*, a chief, or the next heir to an estate—have been frequently found. These stones were used in connection with the coronation of a king or the inauguration of a chief. The custom dates from the remotest antiquity. We see traces of it in the Bible,—as when it is mentioned that “Abimelech was made king by the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem”; and “Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants”; and that when Joash was anointed king by Jehoiada, “the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was”; and again, King Josiah “stood by a pillar” to make a covenant, “and all the people stood to the covenant.” The stone connected with the ceremony was regarded as the most sacred attestation of the engagement entered into between the newly elected king or chief and his people. It was placed in some conspicuous position, upon the top of a “moot-hill,” or the open-air place of assembly. Upon it was usually carved an impression of a human foot; and into this impression, during the ceremony of inauguration, the king or chief placed his own right foot, in token that he was installed by right into the possessions of his predecessors, and that he would walk in their footsteps. It may be said literally, that in this way the king or chief came to an understanding with his people; and perhaps the common saying of “stepping into a dead man’s shoes” may have originated from this primitive custom.

The most famous of the Tanist stones is the Coronation-stone in Westminster Abbey—the Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny—on which the ancient kings of Scotland sat or

stood when crowned, and which forms a singular link of connection between the primitive rites that entered into the election of a king by the people, and the gorgeous ceremonies by which the hereditary sovereigns of England are installed into their high office. There is no footmark, however, on this stone. A more characteristic specimen of a Tanist stone may be seen on the top of Dun Add, a rocky isolated hill about 200 feet high, in Argyleshire, not far from Ardrishaig. On a smooth flat piece of rock which protrudes above the surface there is carved the mark of a right foot, covered with the old *cuaran* or thick stocking, eleven inches long and four inches and a half broad at the widest part, the heel being an inch less. It is sunk about half an inch in the rock, and is very little weather-worn—the reason being, perhaps, that it has been protected for ages by the turf that has grown over it, and has only recently been exposed. Quite close to it is a smooth polished basin, eleven inches in diameter and eight deep, also scooped out of the rock. With these two curious sculptures is associated a local myth. Ossian, who lived for a time in the neighbourhood, was one day hunting on the mountain above Loch Fyne. A stag which his dogs had brought to bay charged him, and he fled precipitately. Coming to the hill above Kilmichael, he strode in one step across the valley to the top of Rudal Hill, from whence he took a gigantic leap to the summit of Dun Add. But when he alighted he was somewhat exhausted by his great effort, and fell on his knee, and stretched out his hands to prevent him from falling backwards. He thereupon left on the rocky top of Dun Add the enduring impression of his feet and knee which we see at the present day.

This myth is of comparatively recent date, and is interesting as showing that all recollection of the original use of the footmark and basin had died away for many ages in the district. There can be no doubt that the footmark indicates the spot to have been at one time the scene of the inauguration of the kings or chiefs of the region; and the basin was in all probability one of those primitive mortars which were in use for grinding corn long before the invention of the quern. Dun Add is one of the oldest sites in Scotland. It has the hoary ruins of a nameless fort, and a well which is traditionally said to ebb and flow with the tide. It was here that the Dalriadic Scots first settled; and Captain Thomas, who has written an interesting article on the subject in the 'Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,' supposes that the remarkable relic on Dun Add was made for the inauguration of Fergus More Mac Erca, the first king of Dalriada, who died in Scotland at the beginning of the sixth century, and to have been the exact measure of his foot.

King in his 'Munimenta Antiqua' mentions that in the island of Islay there was on a mound or hill where the high court of judicature sat, a large stone fixed, about seven feet square, in which there was a cavity or deep impression made to receive the feet of Macdonald, who was crowned King of the Isles standing on this stone, and swore that he would continue his vassals in the possession of their lands, and do impartial justice to all his subjects. His father's sword was then put into his hand, and the Bishop of Argyle and seven priests anointed him king in presence of all the heads of the tribes in the Isles and mainland, and at the same time an orator rehearsed

a catalogue of his ancestors. In the year 1831, when a mound locally known as the "Fairy Knowe," in the parish of Carmylie, Forfarshire, was levelled in the course of some agricultural improvements in the place, there was found, besides stone cists and a bronze ring, a rude boulder almost two tons in weight, on the under side of which was sculptured the mark of a human foot. The mound or tumulus was in all likelihood a moot-hill, where justice was dispensed, and the chieftains of the district were elected. In the same county, in the wild recesses of Glenesk, near Lord Dalhousie's shooting-lodge of Milldam, there is a rough granite boulder, on the upper surface of which a small human foot is scooped out with considerable accuracy, showing traces even of the toes. It is known in the glen as the "Fairy's Footmark." There can be no doubt that this stone was once used in connection with the ceremonial of inaugurating a chief. A similar stone, carved with a representation of two feet, on which the primitive chiefs stood when publicly invested with the insignia of office, is still, or was lately, in existence in Ladykirk, at Burwick, South Ronaldshay, Orkney. A local tradition, that originated long after the Pictish chiefs passed away, and a new Norse race, ignorant of the customs of their predecessors, came in, says that the stone in question was used by St Magnus as a boat to ferry him over the Pentland Firth; while an earlier tradition looked upon it as a miraculous whale which opportunely appeared at the prayer of the saint when about to be overwhelmed by a storm, and carried him on its back safely to the shore, where it was converted into a stone, as a perpetual memorial of the marvellous occurrence. In North Yell, Shetland, there is a rude

stone lying on the hillside, on which is sculptured with considerable skill the mark of a human foot. It is known in the district as the "Giant's Step"; another of the same kind, it is said, being over in Unst. It is undoubtedly the stone on which, in Celtic times, the native kings of this part were crowned. On the top of a hill near St Fillans, in the county of Perth, there are cavities in a rock, said to have been worn by the knees of St Fillan, who often retired to this solitude to pray, which may have the same origin. And probably the "Witch's Stone," forming part of a so-called Druidic circle within the pleasure-grounds of Monzie Castle, near Crieff, may have been used for a similar purpose. It stands apart from and is larger than the others, and has on its surface several cup-shaped hollows, among which two larger markings present a resemblance to the rude outlines of the human foot. These markings are regarded in the neighbourhood as the impressions of the witch's feet. About a mile from Keill, near Campbelltown, a very old site, closely connected with the early ecclesiastical history of Scotland, may be seen on a rock what is locally called the "Footprint of St Columba," which he made when he landed on this shore on one occasion from Iona. It is very rude, and much effaced; but it carries the imagination much further back than the days of St Columba,—when a pagan chief or king was inaugurated here to rule over the district.

In England and Wales there are several interesting examples of footprints on boulders and rocks. A remarkable Tanist stone—which, however, has no carving upon it, I believe—stands, among a number of other and smaller boulders, on the top of a hill near the village of Long Compton, in Cumberland.

It is called "The King"; and the popular rhyme of the country people—

"If Long Compton thou canst see,
Then king of England thou shalt be"—

points to the fact that the stone must have been once used as a coronation-stone. Not far from the top of a hill near Barmouth in Wales, in the middle of a rough path, may be seen a flat stone, in which there is a footmark about the natural size, locally known as "Llan Maria," or Mary's step, because the Virgin Mary once, it is supposed, put her foot on this rock, and then walked down the hill to a lower height covered with roots of oak-trees. This impression on the stone is associated with several stone circles and cromlechs—one of which bears upon it the reputed marks of Arthur's fingers, and is called Arthur's Quoit—and with a spring of water, and a grove, as the path leading to the hill is still known by a Welsh name which means Grove Lane; and these associations undoubtedly indicate that the spot was once a moot-hill or prehistoric sanctuary, where religious and inauguration rites were performed. At Smithill's Hall, near Bolton-le-Moors, there is still to be seen—an object of interest and curiosity to a large number of visitors—the print of a man's foot in the flagstone. It is said to have been produced by George Marsh, who suffered martyrdom during the persecutions of Queen Mary in 1555. When on one occasion the truth of his words was called in question by his enemies, he stamped his foot upon the stone on which he stood, which ever after bore the ineffaceable impression as a miraculous testimony to his veracity. This story must have been an after-thought, to account for what we may suppose to have

been a prehistoric Tanist stone. In connection with this modern legend, another of a somewhat different character may be related. A good many years ago, at the back of the British Museum, there was a piece of waste ground called Southampton Fields, noted as a resort for low characters. There was a tradition connected with it, that two brothers in the Monmouth rebellion took opposite sides, and engaged each other in fight. Both were killed, and forty impressions of their feet were traceable in the field for years afterwards. The field has been long built over, and the precise locality cannot now be pointed out. But Southey went to see the curious sight, and has given a graphic description of it in the second series of his 'Common-place Book.' The impressions were about three inches deep in the hard soil; no grass ever grew in the terrible hollows, and no cultivation of the soil could obliterate them, for when the ground was ploughed they persisted in reappearing. Southey mentions that he saw no reason to doubt the truth of the story, since it had been confirmed by these tokens for more than a hundred years successively. It is probably a fact with a circumstance,—the circumstance, to say the least, extremely doubtful. Upon the legend, which was known far and wide, Jane and Anna Maria Porter based one of their popular romances, called 'The Field of the Forty Footsteps'; and the Messrs Mayhew took the same subject for a melodrama.

In Ireland footmarks are very numerous, and are attributed by the peasantry to different saints. Mr and Mrs S. O. Hall, in their account of Ireland, refer to several curious examples which are regarded by the people with superstitious reverence, and are the

occasions of religious pilgrimage. Near the chapel of Glenfinlough, in King's County, there is a ridge with a boulder on it called the Fairy's Stone or the Horseman's Stone, which presents on its flat surface, besides cup-like hollows, crosses, and other markings, rudely carved representations of the human foot. On a stone near Parsonstown, called Fin's Seat, there are similar impressions—also associated with crosses—cup-shaped hollows, which are traditionally said to be the marks of Fin Mac Coul's thumb and fingers. On an exposed and smooth surface of rock on the northern slope of the Clare Hills, in the townland of Dromandoora, there is the engraved impression of a foot clothed with a sandal; and near it is sculptured on the rock a figure resembling the caduceus of Mercury, while there are two cromlechs in the immediate vicinity. The inauguration-stone of the Macmahons still exists on the hill of Lech—formerly called Mullach Leaght, or "hill of the stone"—three miles south of Meaghan; but the impression of the foot was unfortunately effaced by the owner of the farm about the year 1809. In the garden of Belmont on the Green-castle road, about a mile from Londonderry, there is the famous stone of St Columba, held in great veneration as the inauguration-stone of the ancient kings of Aileach, and which St Patrick is said to have consecrated with his blessing. On this remarkable stone, which is about seven feet square, composed of a hard gneiss, and quite undressed by the chisel, are sculptured two feet, right and left, about ten inches long each. Boullaye le Gouze mentions that in 1644 the print of St Fin Bar's foot might be seen on a stone in the cemetery of the Cathedral of Cork; it has long since disappeared.

In the beautiful demesne of Lord Kenmare at Killarney is a famous stone, with two hollows on its upper surface, called Clough-na-cuddy. It is associated with a legend which, like the stories of wonderful sleepers, is common to most countries. It is told at some length by Mr Croker. A monk called Father Cuddy, belonging to the monastery of Innisfallen, in the Lake of Killarney, went one day to fetch a tun of wine from the neighbouring abbey of Irelagh, now Mucross. He remained in that place till evening, partaking of the hospitality of his clerical friends. On his way home a vision of a beautiful white-robed maiden appeared to him, holding a bottle in her hand, and archly looking back upon him over her shoulder. He followed the alluring apparition till his feet grew weary and his breath failed; and then falling down instinctively upon his knees in the attitude of devotion, he fell sound asleep, and did not awake till the morning was far advanced. When he opened his eyes he found, to his intense astonishment, everything around him changed. Old woods which he remembered were cut down, and heights that were formerly bare were covered with aged timber. Waste places were cultivated, and once hospitable houses had become lonely ruins. The season itself was changed. It was summer when he fell asleep; but now the ground was white with the hoar-frost of midwinter, and the trees were leafless. Trying to rise, he found both his knees buried six inches in the solid stone. Betaking himself to his home, he found a stranger at the gate of the monastery, who harshly repelled him; and all the familiar things of former years were changed, and his old friends long dead. The monastery lands and possessions

were confiscated and in the hands of laymen, and a new faith had arisen in the land. A hundred years had passed away since the hapless monk had fallen asleep. His place and occupation gone, he left the country and settled in Spain, where he gently wore out the remainder of his days.

In the same region is the promontory of Coleman's Eye — so called after a legendary person who leapt across the stream, and left his footprints impressed in the solid rock on the other side. These impressions are considered Druidic, and are pointed out as such to the curious stranger by the Killarney guides. Near Bantry is the mountain of the Priest's Leap, Keim-an-eigh. It is so called from a singular rock which interferes with the road to Bantry, and which the people will not remove on account of two excavations of a remarkable character on its surface. The legend connected with them says that a priest on one occasion was riding by the old road over the mountains, when he was seen and pursued by his enemies. Just as they laid their hands upon him, he prayed to St Fiachna, and the ass he rode gave a leap, and sprang seven miles over the mountain to the other side, and left the marks of its knees on the solid rock to this day. Not far off are the ruins of an old church, outside the burial-ground of which is a natural rock of a tabular form, with five basin-like hollows on its surface, about a foot in diameter and four or five inches in depth. They are filled with water usually; and in each is a long oval stone, fitting the hollow space exactly. The peasants of the neighbourhood say that it is a petrified dairy, the basins being the keelers, and the oval stones the rolls of butter. And they account for it by the following

curious legend. In ancient times a woman lived on the spot who surreptitiously milked the cows of her neighbours at night, and transferred the stolen produce to her own dairy. Suspected at last, the neighbours complained of her to St Fiachna, who ministered at the old church referred to. He mounted his horse, and set out to punish her; but the woman, suspecting his errand, fled. The saint, as he passed by, turned her dairy into stone, and then pursued her. In crossing the stream, his horse left the prints of its feet on a stone in the centre of it. Overtaking the guilty woman, his curse immediately changed her into a boulder, which may still be seen in the locality.

So common are the curious sculptures under consideration in Norway and Sweden, that they are known by the distinct name of *Fotsulor*, or Footsoles. They are marks of either naked feet, or of feet shod with primitive sandals. On a rock at Brygdæa in Westerbotten, in Norway, there are no less than thirty footmarks carved on a rock at an equal distance from each other. In other parts of Norway these footprints are mixed up with rude outlines of ships, wheels, and other *hällristningar*, or rock-sculptures. Holmberg has figured many of them in his interesting work entitled 'Scandinavien's Hällristningar.' At Lökeberg Bohnslau, Sweden, there is a group of ten pairs of footmarks, associated with cup-shaped hollows and ship-carvings; and at Backa, in the same district, several pairs of feet, or rather shoe-marks, are engraved upon a rock. In Denmark not a few examples of artificial foot-tracks have been observed and described by Dr Petersen. One was found on a slab belonging to the covering of a gallery in the inside of a tomb in the island of Seeland,

and another on one of the blocks of stone surrounding a tumulus in the island of Laaland. In both cases the soles of the feet are represented as being covered; and in all probability they belong to the late stone or earlier bronze age. With these sepulchral marks are associated curious Danish legends, which refer them to real impressions of human feet. The islands of Denmark were supposed to have been made by enchanter, who wished for greater facilities for going to and fro, and dropped them in the sea as stations or stepping-stones on their way; and hence, in a region where the popular imagination poetises the commonest material objects, and is saturated with stories of elves and giants, with magic swords, and treasures guarded by dragons, it was not difficult to conclude that these mysterious foot-sculptures were made by the tread of supernatural beings. Near the station of Sens, in France, famous for its cathedral of St Etienne, whose builder erected Canterbury Cathedral a few years later, there is a curious dolmen, on one of whose upright stones or props are carved two human feet. And farther north, in Brittany, upon a block of stone in the barrow or tumulus of Petit Mont at Arzon, may be seen carved an outline of the soles of two human feet, right and left, with the impressions of the toes very distinctly cut, like the marks left by a person walking on the soft sandy shore of the sea. They are surrounded by a number of waving circular and serpentine lines exceedingly curious.

In not a few places in our own country and on the Continent, rough misshapen marks on rocks and stones, bearing a fanciful resemblance to the outline of the human foot, have been supposed by popular superstition to have been made by Satan. Every clas-

sical student is familiar with the account which Herodotus gives of the print of Hercules shown by the Scythians in his day upon a rock near the river Tyras, the modern Dnieper. It was said to resemble the footstep of a man, only that it was two cubits long. He will also recall the description given by the same gossip writer of the Temple of Perseus in the Thebaic district of Egypt, in which a sandal worn by the god, two cubits in length, occasionally made its appearance as a token of the visit of Perseus to the earth, and a sign of prosperity to the land. Pythagoras measured similar footprints at Olympia, and calculated "*ex pede Herculem*"! Still more famous was the mark on the volcanic rock on the shore of Lake Regillus—the scene of the memorable battle in which the Romans, under the dictator Posthumius, defeated the powerful confederation of the Latin tribes under the Tarquins. According to tradition, the Roman forces were assisted by Castor and Pollux, who helped them to achieve their signal victory. The mark was supposed to have been left by the horse of one of the great twins who fought so well for Rome, as Macaulay says in his spirited ballad. On the way to the famous convent of Monte Oasino, very near the door, there is a cross in the middle of the road. In front of it a grating covers the mark of a knee, which is said to have been left in the rock by St Benedict, when he knelt there to ask a blessing from heaven before laying the foundation-stone of his convent. As the site of the monastery was previously occupied by a temple of Apollo, and a grove sacred to Venus, where the inhabitants of the surrounding locality worshipped as late as the sixth century,—to which circumstance Dante alludes,

—it is probable that the sacred mark on the rock may have belonged to the old pagan idolatry, and have been a cup-marked stone connected with sacrificial libations. On the Lucanian coast, near the little fishing-town of Agrapoli, not far from Pæstum, there is shown on the limestone rock the print of a foot, which is said by the inhabitants to have been made by the Apostle Paul, who lingered here on his way to Rome.

On many rocks of the United States of America may be seen human footprints, either isolated or connected with other designs belonging to the pictorial system of the aborigines, and commemorating incidents which they thought worthy of being preserved. In the collection of the Smithsonian Museum are three large stone slabs having impressions of the human foot. On two slabs of sandstone, carefully cut from rocks on the banks of the Missouri, may be seen respectively two impressions of feet, carved apparently with moccasins, such as are worn at the present day by the Sioux and other western tribes of Indians. The other specimen is a flat boulder of white quartz, obtained in Gasconade county, Missouri, which bears on one of its sides the mark of a naked foot, each toe being distinctly scooped out and indicated. The footmark is surrounded by a number of cup-shaped depressions. In Equatorial Africa similar footprints have also been found, and are associated with the folk-lore of the country. Stanley, in his 'Dark Continent,' tells us that in the legendary history of Uganda, Kimeru, the third in descent from Ham, was so large and heavy that he made marks in the rocks wherever he trod. The impression of one of his feet is shown at Uganda, on a rock near the capital, Ulagolla. It was made by one of his

feet slipping while he was in the act of hurling his spear at an elephant. In the South Sea Islands department of the British Museum is an impression of a gigantic foot-step five feet in length.

Perhaps the most interesting of all the curious relics of the past of this description are the sepulchral slabs with footprints carved upon them, which bear unmistakable evidence that they belonged originally to the Catacombs of Rome. In their case the prehistoric symbolism was continued into a comparatively late historical era, and grafted upon the sacred memorials of Christianity. The best known and most remarkable of these slabs is the fragment of white marble preserved on the floor of the quaint old church on the Appian Way at Rome, called "*Domine quo Vadis*," on account of the exquisitely beautiful legend, first found in St Ambrose, connected with it. During the persecution of Nero, St Peter was fleeing from the city, when our Lord met him on this spot, with His face turned Romewards. The apostle asked Him, "*Domine quo vadis?*" (Lord, whither goest Thou?)—in reply to which our Lord said, "*I go to Rome to be crucified a second time.*" Struck with remorse, St Peter turned back immediately; and, according to the common tradition, was nailed to a cross, with his head downwards, on the Janicular Mount, on the spot now marked by the church of St Pietro, in Montorio. In the place where our Saviour stood, the impressions of His feet were left ever afterwards on the pavement. The stone containing these footmarks in the church of *Domine quo Vadis* is a copy—the original being carefully preserved in one of the chapels of the church of St Sebastian on the Appian Way, a little farther out, celebrated for its numerous relics. It is evident

that the legend was an afterthought, to account for the footprints; for the material on which they are impressed, being white marble, proves conclusively that the slab could never have formed part of the pavement of the Apian Way, which, it is well known, was composed of an unusually hard lava found in a quarry near the tomb of Cecilia Metella; and the distinct marks of the chisel which the impressions bear—for I examined the footprints very carefully some years ago—disprove their supernatural origin. The traditional relic in all probability belonged to the early subterranean cemetery, leading by a door out of the left aisle of the church of St Sebastian, to which the name of Catacomb was originally applied.

In the Kircherian Museum in Rome, in the room devoted to early Christian antiquities, there is a square slab of white marble with two pairs of footprints elegantly incised upon it, pointed in opposite directions, as if produced by a person going and returning, or by two persons crossing each other. There is no record from what catacomb this sepulchral slab was taken. We have descriptions of other relics of the same kind from the Roman Catacombs,—such as a marble slab bearing upon it the mark of the sole of a foot, with the words “In Deo” incised upon it at the one end, and at the other an inscription in Greek meaning “Januaria in God”; and a slab with a pair of footprints carved on it covered with sandals, well executed, which was placed by a devoted husband over the locus or tomb of his wife. Impressions of feet shod with shoes or sandals are much rarer than those of bare feet; and a pair of feet is a more customary representation than a single foot, which, when carved, is usually in profile. In a dark, half-subterranean

chapel, green with damp, belonging to the church of St Christina in the town of Bolsena, on the great Volscian Mere of Macaulay, there is a stone let into the front of the altar, and protected by an iron grating, on which is rudely impressed a pair of misshapen feet very like those in the church of St Sebastian at Rome. In the lower church at Assisi there is a duplicate of these footprints. The legend connected with them says that they were produced by the feet of a Christian lady named Christina, living in the neighbourhood in pagan times, who was thrown into the adjoining lake by her persecutors, with a large flat stone attached to her body. Instead of sinking her, the stone formed a raft which floated her in a standing attitude safely to the opposite shore, where she landed—leaving the prints of her feet upon the stone as an incontestable proof of the reality of the miracle. The altar with which the slab is engrafted—with a stone *baldacchino* over it—I may mention, was the scene of the famous miracle of Bolsena, when a Bohemian priest, officiating here in 1263, was cured of his sceptical doubts regarding the reality of transubstantiation by the sudden appearance of drops of blood on the Host which he had just consecrated—an incident which formed the subject of Raphael's well-known picture in the Vatican, and in connection with which Pope Urban IV. instituted the festival of Corpus Christi. In the famous church of Radegonde at Poitiers, dedicated to the queen of Clothaire I.—who afterwards took the veil, and was distinguished for her piety—there is shown on a white marble slab a well-defined footmark, which is called “Le pas de Dieu,” and is said to indicate the spot where the Saviour appeared to the tutelary saint of the

place. The footprint of Mary is very common in churches in Italy and Spain, where it is highly venerated. The reader who cares to follow up the subject, may consult an interesting article on "Plantes de Pied" in Martigny's 'Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.'

In connection with these peculiar footprints, I may mention the existence of foot-shaped rings which have also been found in the Roman Catacombs. These rings, coarsely made of bronze, have their bezel in the form of a long flat plate wrought in the shape of the sole of the foot, or rather of the shoe, and inscribed with the name of the owner, or with a Christian motto or device, such as "Hope," "In God," or the monogram of Christ. Such rings have been found in the interesting Catacomb of St Agnese, outside the Porta Pia. In the burying-place of the very ancient church of St Sisto on the Appian Way, where St Dominic first established his Order in Rome, have been found stamped, no less than five times, on the mortar of a tomb in which a gilt glass goblet was embedded, the impression of the foot-sole on one of these curious seals, with the word "Pauli" incised upon it. Such foot-shaped rings were used by pagans as well as by Christians; and examples of them are preserved in the Kircherian, Vatican, and Castellani Museums in Rome, and in our own British Museum.

The significance of these foot-marks on rings and marble slabs has been the subject of much controversy. Some have regarded them as symbols of possession—the word "possession" being supposed to be etymologically derived from the Latin words *pedis positio*, and meaning literally the position of the foot. The adage of the ancient jurists was, "Quicquid pes tuus calcaverit tuum erit." The

symbol of a foot was carved on the marble slab that closed the *loculus* or tomb, to indicate that it was the purchased property of the person who reposed in it; or the bezel of the ring was wrought into the shape of a shoe, to prove that whatever object was stamped or sealed with its impression, belonged to the owner of the ring. This view, however, has not been generally received with favour by the most competent authorities. A more plausible theory is that which regards the sepulchral footmarks in the Catacombs as votive offerings of gratitude, ordered by Christians to be made in commemoration of the completion of their earthly pilgrimage, and the standing of their feet within the gates of the heavenly city. It was a common pagan custom for persons who had recovered from disease or injury, to hang up as thank-offerings in the shrines of the gods who were supposed to have healed them, images or representations, moulded in metal, clay, or wood, of the part that had been affected. In Italy, votive tablets were dedicated to Iris and Hygiea on which footmarks were engraved; and Hygiea received on one occasion tributes of this kind which recorded the gratitude of some Roman soldiers who escaped the amputation which was inflicted upon their comrades by Hannibal. This custom survived in the early Christian Church, and is still kept up, as any one who visits a modern shrine of pilgrimage in Roman Catholic countries can testify. Among such votive offerings, models and carved and painted representations of feet in stone, or wood, or metal, are frequently suspended before the image of the Madonna, in gratitude for recovery from some disease of the feet. We may suppose that as the ancient Romans, when they re-

turned safely from some long and dangerous or difficult journey undertaken for business or health, dedicated in gratitude a representation of their feet to their favourite god—so the early Christians, who in their original condition were pagans, and still cherished many of their old customs, ordered these peculiar footmarks to be made upon their graves, in token of thankfulness that for them the pilgrimage of life was over, and the endless rest begun. There can be little doubt that the slab with the so-called footprints of St Christina on it at Bolsena, already alluded to, was a pagan ex-votive offering; for the altar on which it is engrafted occupies the site of one anciently dedicated to Apollo, and the legend of St Christina gradually crystallised around it. And the footprint in the church of Radegonde at Poitiers was more likely pagan than Christian, for Poitiers had a Roman origin, and numerous Roman remains have been found in the town and neighbourhood. This is a much more beautiful and plausible explanation of these curious relics than any other.

In connection with this subject, I may mention that one of the most striking burial customs of the early ages was to put shoes on the feet of the dead, even though the body might be left naked, that they might be ready for the judgment. Members of religious orders were usually thus buried; but laymen also had their feet shod in their coffins. It was a pagan as well as a Christian custom. The Sardinians uniformly practised it. In the days of Gisle the Outlaw, it is said that when they were laying out Vestein in his grave, Thorgrim the priest went up to the mound and said, "It is the custom to bind the 'hell-shoes' on men, so that they may walk in them to Valhalla—and I will now do that by Vestein;"

and when he had done this, he said, "I know nothing about binding on hell-shoes if these loosen."

A long and curious list might be made of the miraculous impressions said to have been left by our Saviour's feet on the places where He stood. High in the centre of the platform at Jerusalem on which the Temple of Solomon stood, covered by the dome of the Sakrah Mosque, a portion of the rough natural limestone rock rises several feet above the marble pavement, and is the principal object of veneration in the place. It has an excavated chamber in one corner, with an aperture through the rocky roof, which has given to the rock the name of "*lapis pertusus*," or perforated stone. On this rock there are natural or artificial marks, which the successors of the Caliph Omar believed to be the prints of the angel Gabriel's fingers, and the mark of Mahomet's foot, and that of his camel, which performed the whole journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in four bounds only. The stone, it is said, originally fell from heaven, and was used as a seat by the venerable prophets of Jerusalem. So long as they enjoyed the gift of prophecy, the stone remained steady under them; but when the gift was withdrawn, and the persecuted seers were compelled to flee for safety to other lands, the stone rose to accompany them: whereupon the angel Gabriel interposed, and prevented the departure of the prophetic chair, leaving on it indelibly the marks of his fingers. It was then supernaturally nailed to its rocky bed by seven brass nails. When any great crisis in the world's fortunes happens, the head of one of these nails disappears; and when they are all gone, the day of judgment will come. There are now only three left, and therefore the Mohammedans believe that the end of

all things is not far off. When the Crusaders took possession of the sacred city, they altered the Mohammedan legend, and attributed the mysterious footprint to our Lord when He went out of the Temple to escape the fury of the Jews. It is possible that the marks on the rock may be pre-historic, and may belong to the primitive worship of Mount Moriah, long before the august associations of Biblical history gathered around it. What renders this idea very plausible is the continued survival, almost to our own day, of what may well be regarded as pre-historic superstitions in the spot. For instance, in the corridor of the neighbouring Mosque of Aksa, which also contains a print of Christ's feet on a stone, are two columns standing closely together, which had for ages been regarded as a test of character. It is said that whoever could squeeze himself between them was certain of Paradise. The pillars have been worn thin by the constant repetition of the feat. While on the rock of the Sakrah, the Jews used to come in the fourth century and wail over it, and *anoint it with oil*, as if carrying out some dim tradition of former primitive libations. Such an idea opens up a most interesting line of suggestion.

In the Octagon Chapel of the Church of the Ascension on the top of the Mount of Olives, so well known for the magnificent view which it commands of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, is shown the native rock which forms the summit of the hill from which our Lord ascended into heaven. On this rock, it is said by tradition, He left the mark of His footsteps. Arculf, who visited Palestine about the year 700, says—

"On the ground in the midst of the church are to be seen the last prints in the dust of our Lord's feet, and the

roof appears above where He ascended; and although the earth is daily carried away by believers, yet still it remains as before, and retains the same impression of the feet."

Jerome mentions that in his time the same custom was observed, followed by the same singular result. Later writers, however, asserted that the impressions were made, not in the ground, or in the dust, but on the solid rock; and that originally there were two, one of them having been stolen long ago by the Mohammedans, who broke off the fragment of stone on which it was stamped. Sir John Mandeville describes the appearance of the solitary surviving footprint as it looked in his day, 1322: "From that mount our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven on Ascension Day, and yet there appears the impress of His left foot in the stone." What is now seen in the place is a simple rude cavity in the natural rock, which bears but the slightest resemblance to the human foot. It may have been artificially sculptured, or it may be only one of those curious hollows into which limestone rocks are frequently weathered. In either case, it naturally lent itself to the sacred legend that has gathered around it.

In the Kaaba, the most ancient and remarkable building of the great Mosque at Mecca, is preserved a miraculous stone, with the print of Abraham's feet impressed upon it. It is said, by Mohammedan tradition, to be the identical stone which served the patriarch as a scaffold when he helped Ishmael to rebuild the Kaaba, which had been originally constructed by Seth, and was afterwards destroyed by the Deluge. While Abraham stood upon this stone, it rose and sank with him as he built the walls of the sacred edifice. The relic is said to be a fragment of the same grey Mecca

stone of which the whole building is constructed,—in this respect differing from the famous black stone brought to Abraham and Ishmael by the angel Gabriel, and built into the north-east corner of the exterior wall of the Kaaba, which is generally supposed to be either a meteorite or fragment of volcanic basalt. It is supposed to have been originally a jacinth of dazzling whiteness, but to have been made black as ink by the touch of sinful man, and that it can only recover its original purity and brilliancy at the day of judgment. The millions of kisses and touches impressed by the faithful have worn the surface considerably; but in addition to this, traces of cup-shaped hollows have been observed on it. There can be no doubt that both the relics associated with Abraham are of high antiquity, and may possibly have belonged to the prehistoric worship which marked Mecca as a sacred site, long before the followers of the Prophet had set up their shrine there. On Jebel Mûsa, at a short distance from the convent of Mar Elias, a mark is shown in the rock, somewhat resembling the print of the forepart of the foot, which is said to be either that of the Prophet himself or of his camel, and is devoutly kissed by all Mohammedans. The monks of St Catherine say, however, that this mark was made by their own brethren in former days, to secure the sanctity of the place, and preserve themselves from the attacks of the Bedouins.

On the top of Gerizim, one of the most ancient of the holy places in Palestine, and probably the site of a prehistoric sanctuary, is pointed out a curious flight of steps, variously called "the seven steps of Adam out of Paradise," or "the seven steps of Abraham's altar." And it is interesting to

notice, in connection with these steps, the recent discovery of a cup-shaped hollow, about a foot in diameter and nine inches deep, on the same rock, exactly like numerous other artificial hollows found on flat rocks beside dolmens in Palestine, and in our own and other countries. The Samaritans say that this hollow marked the spot where the laver in the court of their tabernacle stood. It was intended, in all probability, to retain libations poured on the sacred rock, and was connected with the primitive worship of the locality, before the Samaritans came to the neighbourhood. In the sacred Mosque of Hebron, built over the cave of Machpelah, is pointed out a footprint of the ordinary size on a slab of stone, variously called that of Adam or of Mohammed. It is said to have been brought from Mecca some six hundred years ago, and is enclosed in a recess at the back of the shrine of Abraham, where it is placed on a sort of shelf about three feet above the floor. On the margin of the tank, in the court of the ruined mosque at Baalbec, there are shown four giant footmarks, which are supposed to have been impressed by some patriarch or prophet, but are more likely to have been connected with the ancient religion of Canaan, which lingered here to the latest days of Roman paganism. In Damascus there was at one time a sacred building called the Mosque of the Holy Foot, in which there was a stone having upon it the print of the feet of Moses. Ibn Batuta saw this curious relic early in the fourteenth century; but both the mosque and the stone have since disappeared. On the eastern side of the Jordan a Bedouin tribe, called the Adwân, worship the print left on a stone by the roadside by a prophetess while mounting

her camel, in order to proceed on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Kadriyeh dervishes of Egypt adore a gigantic shoe, as an emblem of the sacred foot of the founder of their sect; and near Madura, a large leather shoe is offered in worship to a deity that, like Diana, presides over the chase.

It may be mentioned in this connection, that on the figures carved on all the Hittite monuments the shoes resemble the Canadian moccasins, with a long bandage wound round the foot and ankle, which is the best possible covering for the foot in a country where the cold in winter is intense and the snow lingers long on the ground. These sandals are exactly like those worn by the Kurdiash tribes at the present day, and show that the Hittites of Palestine did not belong to a Semitic race, but were a migrating people, who came originally from a cold Northern region.

To the student of comparative religion the Phrabat, or Sacred Foot of Buddha, opens up a most interesting field of investigation. In the East, impressions of the feet of this wonderful person are as common as those of Christ and the Virgin Mary in the West. Buddhists are continually increasing the number by copies of the originals; and native painters of Siam who are ambitious of distinction, often present these sacred objects to the king, adorned with the highest skill of their art, as the most acceptable gift they can offer. The sacred footprint enters into the very essence of the Buddhist religion; it claims from the Indo-Chinese nations a degree of veneration scarcely yielding to that which they pay to Buddha himself. It is very ancient, and was framed to embody in one grand symbol a complete system of theology and

theogony, which has been gradually forgotten or perverted by succeeding ages to the purposes of a ridiculous superstition. It is elaborately carved and painted with numerous symbols, each of which has a profound significance. The liturgy of the Siamese connected with it consists of fifty measured lines of eight syllables each, and contains the names of a hundred and eight distinct symbolical objects,—such as the lion, the elephant, the sun and moon in their cars drawn by oxen, the horse, the serpents, the spiral building, the tree, the six spheres, the five lakes, and the altar—all of which are represented on the foot. This list of symbolical allusions is recited by the priests, and forms an essential part of the ritual of worship. The Siamese priests say that any mortal about to arrive at the threshold of Niván has his feet emblazoned spontaneously with all the symbols to be seen on the Phrabat. I have seen a slab from Thibet differing materially from this. Impressions of two feet were carved upon it—each foot-sole being ornamented in the centre with a representation of the sun surrounded by a halo and by three concentric rings, and having one fylfot cross on the large toe, two fylfot crosses on the heel, and immediately below the toes a fylfot cross with a looped tau cross on either side. The tau cross, *crux ansata*, St Anthony's Cross, or the Swastica, is the commonest of all primitive symbols, being found almost everywhere. The Egyptian form of it has a loop or handle, exactly like our astronomical sign of Venus, and is called the "Key of the Nile," or the "Emblem of Life." This is identical with the pattern incised on the footprints of Buddha in the East; and taken in connection with the representation

of the sun on the same footprints, it must be held to symbolise the origin of life, and is always borne in the hands of the gods, or impressed upon objects connected with them.

The Siamese acknowledge only five genuine Phrabats made by the actual feet of Buddha. They are called the Five Impressions of the Divine Foot. The first is on a rock on the coast of the peninsula of Malacca, where, beside the mark of Buddha's foot, there is also one of a dog's foot, which is much venerated by the natives. The second Phrabat is on the Golden Mountain, the hill with the holy footstep of Buddha, in Siam, which Buddha visited on one occasion. The impression is that of the right foot, and is covered with a maradop, a pyramidal canopy supported by gilded pilasters. The hollow of the footstep is generally filled with water, which the devotee sprinkles over his body to wash away the stain of his sin. The third Phrabat is on a hill on the banks of the Jumna, in the midst of an extensive and deep forest, which spreads over broken ranges of hills. The Phrabat is on a raised terrace, like that on which most of the Buddhist temples are built. The pyramidal structure which shelters it is of hewn stone ninety feet high, and is like the *baldacchino* of a Roman Catholic church. There are four impressions on different terraces, each rising above the other, corresponding to the four descents of the deity. The fourth Phrabat is also on the banks of the Jumna. But the fifth and most celebrated of all is the print of the sacred foot on the top of the Amala Sri Pada, or Adam's Peak, in Ceylon. On the highest point of this hill there is a pagoda-like building, supported on slender pillars, and open on every side to the winds. Underneath

this canopy, in the centre of a huge mass of gneiss and hornblende, forming the living rock, there is the rude outline of a gigantic foot about five feet long, and of proportionate breadth.

Sir Emerson Tennent, who has given a full and interesting account of this last Phrabat in his work on Ceylon, to which I am indebted for the following information, supposes that it was originally a natural hollow in the rock, afterwards artificially enlarged and shaped into its present appearance; but whatever may have been its origin at first, its present shape is undoubtedly of great, perhaps prehistoric, antiquity. In the sacred books of the Buddhists it is referred to, upwards of 300 years before Christ, as the impression left of Buddha's foot when he visited the earth after the Deluge, with gifts and blessings for his worshippers; and in the first century of the Christian era it is recorded that a king of Cashmere went on a pilgrimage to Ceylon for the express purpose of adoring this *Sri-pada*, or Sacred Footprint. The Gnostics of the first Christian centuries attributed it to Ieu, the first man; and in one of the oldest manuscripts in existence, now in the British Museum—the Coptic version of the "Faithful Wisdom," said to have been written by the great Gnostic philosopher Valentinus in the fourth century—there is mention made of this venerable relic, the Saviour being said to inform the Virgin Mary that He has appointed the Spirit Kalapataroath as guardian over it. From the Gnostics the Mohammedans received the tradition; for they believe that when Adam was expelled from Paradise he lived many years on this mountain alone, before he was reunited to Eve on Mount Ararat, which overhangs Mecca. The

early Portuguese settlers in the island attributed the sacred footprint to St Thomas, who is said by tradition to have preached the Gospel, after the ascension of Christ, in Persia and India, and to have suffered martyrdom at Malabar, where he founded the Christian Church which still goes by the name of the Christians of St Thomas; and they believed that all the trees on the mountain, and for half a league round about its base, bent their crowns in the direction of this sacred object—a mark of respect which they affirmed could only be offered to the footstep of an apostle. The Brahmins have appropriated the sacred mark as the footprint of their goddess Siva. At the present day the Buddhists are the guardians of the shrine; but the worshippers of other creeds are not prevented from paying their homage at it, and they meet in peace and goodwill around the object of their common adoration. By this circumstance the Christian visitor is reminded of the sacred footprint, already alluded to, on the rock of the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, which is part of a mosque, and has five altars for the Greek, Latin, Armenian, Syrian, and Coptic Churches, all of whom climb the hill on Ascension Day to celebrate the festival; the Mohammedans, too, coming in and offering their prayers at the same shrine. The worship paid on the mountain of the sacred foot in Ceylon consists of offerings of the crimson flowers of the rhododendron, which grow freely among the crags around, accompanied by various genuflexions and shoutings, and concluding with the striking of an ancient bell, and a draught from the sacred well which springs up a little below the summit. These ceremonies point to a very primitive mode of worship; and it is

probable that, as Adam's Peak was venerated from a remote antiquity by the aborigines of Ceylon, being connected by them with the worship of the sun, the sacred footprint may belong to this prehistoric cult. Models of the footprint are shown in various temples in Ceylon.

Besides these five great Phrabats, there are others of inferior celebrity in the East. In the P'hra Pathom of the Siamese, Buddha is said to have left impressions of his feet at Lauca and Ohakravan. At Ava there is a Phrabat near Prome which is supposed to be a type of the creation. Another is seen in the same country on a large rock lying amidst the hills a day's journey west of Meinbu. Dr Leyden says that it is in the country of the Lan that all the celebrated founders of the religion of Buddha are reported to have left their most remarkable vestiges. The traces of the sacred foot are sparingly scattered over Pegu, Ava, and Arracan. But among the Lan they are concentrated; and thither devotees repair to worship at the sacred steps of Pra Kukuson, Pra Konnakan, Pra Puttakatsop, and Pra Samutacadam.

The footsteps of Vishnu are also frequent in India. Sir William Jones tells us that in the Puranas mention is made of a white mountain on which King Sravana sat meditating on the divine foot of Vishnu at the station Trevirana. When the Hindoos entered into possession of Gayá—one of the four most sacred places of Buddhism—they found the popular feeling in favour of the sacred footprint there so strong, that they were obliged to incorporate the relic into their own religious system, and to attribute it to Vishnu. Thousands of Hindoo pilgrims from all parts of India now visit the shrine every year. Indeed to the

worshippers of Vishnu the Temple of Vishnupad at Gayá is one of the most holy in all India; and, as we are informed in the great work of Dr Mitra, the later religious books earnestly enjoin that no one should fail, at least once in his lifetime, to visit the spot. They commend the wish for numerous offspring on the ground that, out of the many, one son might visit Gayá, and by performing the rites prescribed in connection with the holy footstep, rescue his father from eternal destruction. The stone is a large hemispherical block of granite, with an uneven top, bearing the carvings of two human feet. The frequent washings which it daily undergoes have worn out the peculiar sectorial marks which the feet contain, and even the outlines of the feet themselves are but dimly perceptible. English architects are now engaged in preserving the ruins of the splendid temple associated with this footprint, where the ministry of India's great teacher—the "Light of Asia"—began. In the Indian Museum at Calcutta there is a large slab of white marble bearing the figure of a human foot surrounded by two dragons. It was brought from a temple in Burmah, where it used to be worshipped as a representation of Buddha's foot. It is seven inches long and three inches broad, and is divided into a hundred and eight compartments, each of which contains a different mystical mark.

At Gangautri, on the banks of the Ganges, is a wooden temple containing a footprint of Ganga on a black stone. In a strange subterranean temple, inside the great fort at Allahabad, there are two footprints of Vishnu, along with footprints of Rama, and of his wife Sita. In India the "kaddam rassul," or supposed impression of Mohammed's foot in clay, which is kept moist,

and enclosed in a sort of cage, is not unfrequently placed at the head of the gravestones of the followers of Islam. On the summit of a mountain 136 miles south of Bhagalpur is one of the principal places of Jain worship in India. On the table-land are twenty small Jain temples on different craggy heights, which resemble an extinguisher in shape. In each of them is to be found the Vasu Padukas—a sacred foot similar to that which is seen in the Jain temple at Champanagar. The sect of the Jain in South Bihar has two places of pilgrimage. One is a tank choked with weeds and lotus-flowers, which has a small island in the centre containing a temple, with two stones in the interior, on one of which is an inscription and the impression of the two feet of Gautama—the most common object of worship of the Jains in this district. The other is the place in the same part of the country where the body of Mahavira, one of the twenty-four lawgivers, was burnt about six centuries before Christ. It resembles the other temple, and is situated in an island in a tank. The island is terraced round, and in the cavity of the beehive-like top there is the representation of Mahavira's feet, to which crowds of pilgrims are continually flocking. In the centre of the Jain temple at Puri, where this most remarkable man died, there are also three representations of his feet, and one impression of the feet of each of his eleven disciples.

We have thus seen that footprints carved on rocks and stones are found in almost every part of the world. Many of them belong to a class of prehistoric sculptures equally ubiquitous, which have only recently been brought before the notice of the antiquarian world, and which as yet are involved in almost impenetrable mystery.

The connection of prehistoric footprints with sacred sites and places of sepulture would indicate that they had a religious significance,—an idea still further strengthened by the fact of their being frequently associated with holy wells and groves, and with cup-shaped marks on cromlechs or sacrificial altars, which are supposed to have been used for the purpose of receiving libations; while their universal distribution points to a hoary antiquity, when a primitive natural cultus spread over the whole earth, traces of which are found in every land, behind the more elaborate and systematic faith which afterwards took its place. They are probably among the oldest stone-carvings that have been left to us, and were executed by rude races with rude implements either in the later stone or early bronze age. Their subsequent dedication to holy persons in Christian times was in all likelihood only a survival of their original sacred use long ages after the memory of the particular rites and ceremonies connected with them passed away. A considerable proportion of the sacred marks are said to be impressions of the female foot, attributed to the Virgin Mary; and in this circumstance we may perhaps trace a connection with the worship of the receptive element in nature, which was also a distinctive feature of primitive religion. The hand was the male symbol, and was impressed upon various objects,—on the lintel or above the arch of the door, on the standard of the army, and even on the Christian cross, as a relic of one of the oldest of pagan symbols. The “sacred proof” of the sanctity of Nának, the founder of the Sikh sect in India, is the deeply indented mark of an outspread hand on a huge rock.

It is strange how traces of this primitive worship of footprints survive, not merely in the mythical stories and superstitious practices connected with the objects themselves, but also in curious rites and customs that at first sight might seem to have had no connection with them. The throwing of the shoe after a newly-married couple is said to refer to the primitive mode of marriage by capture; but there is equal plausibility in referring it to the prehistoric worship of the footprint as the symbol of the powers of nature. To the same original source we may perhaps attribute the custom connected with the Levirate law in the Bible, when the woman took off the shoe of the kinsman who refused to marry her, whose name should be afterwards called in Israel “the house of him that hath his shoe loosed.” In regard to the general subject, it may be said that we can discern in the primitive adoration of footprints a somewhat advanced stage in the religious thoughts of man. He has got beyond total ignorance and unconsciousness concerning God, and beyond totemism or the mere worship of natural objects—trees, streams, stones, animals, &c. He has reached the conception of a deity who is of a different nature from the objects around him, and whose place of abode is elsewhere. He worships the impression of the foot for the sake of the being who left it; and the impression helps him to realise the presence and to form a picture of his deity. That deity is not a part of nature, because he can make nature plastic to his tread, and leave his footmark on the hard rock as if it were soft mud. He thinks of him as the author and controller of nature, and for the first time rises to the conception of a supernatural being.

LONDON.

I. THE ROW AND WESTMINSTER.

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

"WRITE my thoughts about London"!—Good Heavens! I really don't know yet

Where I stand with my legs, or whither I look with my eyes, Tom :
Such a forest of houses, and such an ocean of people,
Street after street without end, and road into road debouching ;
Such a wheel and a whirl, a mighty maelstrom of mortals,
Surging now here and now there with foamy billows tremendous ;
Such a rattle and roar, and thundering roll portentous,
Over the roofs of the houses, and under their dark foundations.
Whoso has got a cool head may number the busses and cabs here,
Thread his way through the crossings, and wander, not lost, in the lanes
here ;

I can only stand and rub my eyes and wonder,
When I have room to stand, and a cab is not driving behind me !

"Have I *been* in the Row?" Of course : it is really a splendid
Sight, this reel of the gods, this merry-go-round of fashion ;
Fashion and rank and title, and full-blown pomp of existence,
Rolling along in waves upon waves of exuberant joyaunce ;
Rattle of cars, and clatter of steeds well-trained to the harness,
Like to the tramp of the gods when they drive their steeds o'er the glowing
Floors of Olympus ; most like to the radiant march of Apollo,
Lashing his milk-white steeds through the rosy gates of the morning ;
Like to fulminant Jove, when he shakes the reins of his lightning
Over the dark-blue clouds, that nurse the stores of his thunder ;
Like to the starry career of the golden Aphrodite,
Drawn in a car of the swans that borrow the rose from her blushes ;
Like as mortals may be to Immortals,—for we are but shadows,
Dim and dwindled and small, of the primal types in Olympus :
Small, but great in our sphere, and careering with various splendour
Here, as gods, in the Park. Lo ! there in four-handed glory
Rides the pride of the Row, the dexterous master of Coaching,
Burly and big as a Briton may be who rejoices in horses
Here, or at Epsom, in blossomy June on the day of the Derby,
When the pulse of wide London beats quick with keen expectation ;
When from dingy lane and broad-wayed far-viewed mansions,
Stream the people in floods, and even grave statesmen and M.P.'s
Wisely slacken debate ; and, touched with the common contagion,

Strain their eyes with delight on the wind-footed horses at Epsom.
Here a vision more fair!—that well-zoned mettlesome maiden
Loftily throned on the back of a charger proud of his burden;
She with venturous light in her eye, and with breezy beauty
Flushing her cheek, sweeps airily borne like a bird on its pinions,
Sure and fearless; a maiden well braced in nerve and in muscle,
Far from sensual ease, to be mother of lustiest Britons,
Cousined to Romans in strength and in breadth of masterful Empire.
Who comes next in the carriage with twain-tailed glory of funkeys,
Splendid in powder and plush—that bright little man in the corner;
Bright, and beaming, and bland, and a face as round as an apple;
Round and red as an apple, and mellow as apples in autumn!
Surely a duke or an earl, he looks so serene and secure there,
With a whole county to hang on his finger as light as a ring there.
Neither a duke nor an earl, but a brave industrious worker,
Glory of England! through labour and sweat who mounted to honour,
Honour and wealth and repute, and a nod from the Prince in the Park here.
Many such heroes there be, the pride of the practical Briton,
Scooping the mountains, and bridging the flood, and ploughing the ocean;
Wedding the east to the west with electric greetings, and changing
Dross to copper, and copper to gold, by magic of labour
Wonder-working. All praise to the men who by clear persistent
Purpose of work, and strokes of well divined speculation,
Carefully gathered the gold which with generous bounty they squander.
Here comes another suchlike, an Australian merchant; I knew him
Well when a youth at St Andrews—a Scot from the nail to the backbone,—
Plodding his hard-headed way through quadratic equations and fluxions,
Grammars Latin and Greek, indicative mood and subjunctive,
Feeding on these with delight; but soon he flung off the scholar,
Feeling the strain of adventure too strong for the bounds of the College.
Off for Sydney he sailed, and toiled at the desk and the ledger
Year after year, and wisely descried the needs of the market,
Wisely marked out the ground that was fated for building, and wisely
Bought, and waited, and sold when the tide was high for the seller;
Then with brain and with brawn, and with pockets bulging with bullion,
Back to Scotland he came, and planted his money where money
Grows without labour or care, as a little Virginia creeper
Visibly creeps up the porch of a new brick house in Brompton.
Now he rides in the Park; and “Rise, Sir Edward,” the Queen said
Once, when he gave twenty thousand to build a college for ladies.
Happy Sir Edward the Scot! Four peoples are mighty in money,
Jews, and Greeks, and Scots, and John Bull paunchy and proud here.
But here comes another, a big one who maketh his boast of the dollar,
Bred in the land far West where dollars and demos are mighty;
He, by the power of the dollar, from county to county advancing,

Bought the Bens of the Scots, a Transatlantic Nimrod,
Mighty to hunt down the deer before the Lord or the Devil.
Little recked he for the men, the stout-thewed breed of the mountains,
Kilted heroes who fight the battles of England in far lands ;
These, close-huddled, he drove from the crofts, the homes of their fathers,
Down to the shelvy shore to feed upon whelks and mussels,
Till they shall dwindle and die, and free the deer from disturbance.

Let the American pass ! here comes a Briton, a true man,
Albert, Prince of Wales, a prince right princely and portly,
Big and bland and broad as Henry VIII. on his legs stood.
God bless the Prince of Wales, good shoot of good stock, and preserve him
Safe from dynamite plots and Radical sons of negation,—
Men who are never content, and who live on dispraise of their fellows,
Ill at ease in their skin, and kicking against the pricks here,
Pulling the old house down, with promise to build a new one
High in the clouds somewhere, where mortar and brick are not needed.
But I must close my roll : the time would fail me to tell here
Half the pride of the Park, the Duke and the Earl and the Marquis,
Barons and Baronets hung with medals and ribbons of honour,
Trooping car upon car to feed the gaze of the commons.
Wonderful creatures those proud high-perched humanities, sometimes
Only with boastful blood in their veins that creeps from ancestral
Fountain of honour, impure and feeble with flabby indulgence,
Barren of noble exploits ; sometimes with fresh burst of goodness
Native, direct from God, that leaps with electric virtue
Into contagious life, as a well upsprings when a borer
Pricks a vein in the earth. Lo, there a magnificent Duke comes,
Known far north where the Scoto-Celt abuts on the Norseman,
Monarch from sea to sea, with a score of Bens in his pocket ;
Not he lives like an ox, to feed on inherited fatness,
Lazy and languid, but puts forth his arm in quest of adventure,
Chaining the steam for his need, and blasting the rocks, and wrenching
Up from their roots in the moss the stumps of the forest primeval,
Older than Sidon and Tyre, and tombs of Memphian builders.
And here comes another far-famed, a god in the land of the West Gael,
Where the long-drawn loch with silvery serpentine splendour
Licks the feet of the Bens. Not he with mechanic expertness
Tames the fire to his use, or holds the rein of the steam-horse,
But in the chamber of council, with grace of traditional wisdom,
Thoughtful he sits and moulds the measures that fashion the people
Into the fates of the future. Nor only as statesman he wisely
Steers the ship of the state, but from the cathedra of science
Teaches, with Ramsay and Geikie, to spell the story of ages
Written with fire and with flood in the high-piled rocks of the Highlands ;

Grave likewise as a preacher, and owning with reverent wisdom
God in this temple of things, where to live and to look is to worship,
Far from the crude conceit of the sophist, the priest of negation,
Prating of chance in a world that teems with miraculous reason,
Closely cased in the shell of soulless cold speculation,
Seeing with sightless eyes, and, in mid-day splendour of beauty,
Blind to the love of God that shines in the face of creation.

"Westminster?"—Yes, I have seen it, not once or twice, but three times.
Thrice—and three times three, had only my tether allowed it.
August memorial-hall of the noble achievements of Britons,
Whence the dead look down with a shadow of power on the living,
Stirring the fountains of awe, and worship, and proud emulation
Deep in the reverent soul. Look round whoso for Old England
Cherishes love and loyal regard and sacred devotion!
Here look round, and bow his head before the majestic
Pomp of significant names that letter the wall with glory—
Statesman, and soldier, and priest, physician, and scholar, and poet—
Names that signal the march of Britannia, Queen of the Ocean,
Over the fields of fame, where trod the Greek and the Roman.
Lo! where stands like a Titan the might of Chatham, the terror
Once of France, and the bulwark of young American freedom—
Proud, independent, and manful, with lofty self-sustainment;
Dauntless, and laden with fire of scathful hot indignation
'Gainst who doubted the strength or soiled the honour of England.
Who may number their roll?—the pilots that steered the State ship
Safe through eddying tides and buffets of windy commotion
Fitful, and fierce—when feverish France shook Europe with fearful
Tremor of thrones, and froze the blood of the people with horrors
Heaped on horrors. Invincible Pitt, with the soul of a man in
Breast of a boy; sage-counselled Burke, of unquenchable fervour,
Storming the ears of the Senate with strong-winged tempest of splendour;
Grattan, Hibernia's pride, who pled the cause of his people,
Rapid and keen and trenchant, with flashes of sudden conviction,
Mighty with sword of the spirit to strike from the limbs of the prisoner
Bonds of heavy oppression. Next came the pride of Old England,
Palmerston, sturdy and strong, who mid the fevered discussion
Stood untroubled and cool, as one well used to the clamour;
Wise with playful reply to smooth the front of the grumbler.
Not for Liberal he, or Radical party, or Tory
Cared, with wide survey of thought that held the balance of Europe,
But for the honour of Britain, that she might stand in the van still,
Umpire of Empires, and ready to strike where the heel of the tyrant
Tramped on the homes of the free. Then comes another less mighty,
Not less useful than he to serve the need of the moment,—

Peel, not missioned to raise the banner of Change, when the people
 Cries for needful reverse of inherited usage, but prudent,
 Wary, and wise to yield with timely grace when he must yield.
 Near him a lawyer, a Scot, the boast of Perthshire, a Murray,
 Mansfield, the pride of the Bench,—not blazing with flashes of splendour
 He, nor shaking the senate with peals of passionate thunder
 Shot from electric fount, but calm, serene, and unruffled,
 Swaying the reins of right that hold the stars in their courses,
 Keep old Chaos at bay, and smooth the reasonless tumult,
 Then when the system of things would reel into wild aberration,
 Helmless, and heedless of ruin that yawns in the path of the lawless :
 Strong is the law, when calm with unbribed reason the grave judge
 Tempers justice with mercy, and braces mercy with justice,
 Even-handed, declaring the doom that belongs to the guilty.
 Turn we now to another, a diverse,—a prophet, a preacher,
 Looking benignly forth from a chair of chaste meditation,
 Scheming with breath of new life to inspire the stiffened Evangel,
 Crusted with secular forms, and clogged with churchly traditions ;
 Scheming with power apostolic to publish the common-blooded
 Kinship of man with man, and to strike the bonds from the bondman,
 Wilberforce ; nor he alone, but with Buxton, Macaulay, and Wesley,
 Brethren in saintly endeavour to stir the pool of stagnation,
 Lift the lowly, and strengthen the weak, and gather the drifted
 Waifs of unshepherd life into ranks of beautiful order,
 Christ like : they shall be praised when sounded names are forgotten,
 Blazoned with titles of pride, and heraldic badges.

Come with me

Now to a diverse domain where Fame has mustered her armies :
 This is the Poets' Corner : not all who are poets are wise men,
 Brilliant fools not a few, and some mere well-phrased blackguards ;
 Some lie here where they ought not to be, by favour of princes,
 Freak of fortune, or love of women that hung on their fancies :
 Wisdom dwelt not with him, who said that life is a bubble,
 Jest, and laughter, and froth, the breath and the break of a bubble.
 Turn from the shallow away, who slandered sweet life on his tombstone ;
 Slandered or wrote the truth for a fool, and not for a wise man.
 Take him rather who lived in court and in camp as a man should
 Live in the drama of life, diplomatist, soldier, and poet,
 Varied in act and in scene, and weighty with serious purpose ;
 Grave and weighty, but seasoned with smiles like light upon waters
 Widely rolling and deep, our English Chaucer, who bravely
 Followed where Dante led, and first with the tongue of the people
 Spoke to the heart of the people, and pictured the life of the many
 Vivid with native hues, and dressed in the vesture of England,
 Not in the toga of Rome. A mightier follows, a Titan,

He that grew into strength by the soft-flowing waters of Avon,
Strong as the strongest tree, yet light as a butterfly blossom,—
Titan and child in one, co-burgess of Earth and Heaven,
Mirror of Earth and of Sky, in wide capacious bosom
Cradling the great and the small with breadth of motherly kindness,
Guiltless of favour, as God with creative cunning impartial
Moulds the mite and the minnow, and shapes the great sea-monster,
Marvels in largest and least. Not Greece in her palmiest wisdom,
Not imperial Rome in the widest sway of her conquests,
Names in the roll of her fame a name that matches with Shakespeare,
Summed from their best into one. A third, with the mightiest mighty
England grew from her soil ; in sacred grandeur, majestic,
Milton stands. Not London, or Rome, or, dear to the Muses,
Athens, could lend to the strength of his wing its needful expansion,
But from the secret top of Horeb and Sinai, flaming
Awful with terrors of punitive law, and Sion, the praiseful
Hill of Omnipotent God, he drew his proud inspiration,
High as heaven, and wide as the world, and filling all people's
Hearts with the family love of the great All-father Jehovah !

These I saw, and others, the speechful sons of the Muses,
Wise to picture the life, and to feel the pulse of the people,—
Spenser, who, strong with the doctrine of Plato, and grace of the Gospel,
Told in symbolical show the fair array of the Virtues ;
Drayton, who hung round the land of his birth the praise of its beauties,
Praised its towers of renown, and widespread meads of fatness,
Winding rivers, and populous cities that mingle their high-tiered
Hives of work with the sky ; then Cowley I saw, and Campbell,
Stately piling his verse like the Bens of his Highlands ; and Dryden,
Mingling his name with the fame of the young Macedonian monarch,
Strong to conquer the world—but when the feverish wine-cup
Seethed and fumed in his brain, his sun was blotted at midday.
Far from him, and serene in high-souled self-sustainment
Southey stands : not in courts, or in camps, or in din of the city
'Customed to dwell, but softly embosomed in green of the mountains,
Listening with reverent ear to the murmurous swell of the broad lake,
Tinkle of mingling rills or thunderous roar of waters,
Plunging from step to step of the shelvy breast of the mountain ;
Thus remote from the stir of an age that delighted in restless
Shaking of states and churches, and wrenching the roots of tradition,
He with his boon compeer, the tuneful sage of the Lakeland,
Pondered on fate and on man, and on faith that lives in the churches
Ever with diverse face, but ever the same in the upward
Swing of its heaven-taught thought. These twain, Urania, wisest
Daughter of Memory, chose, and nursed in green of the Lakeland,

There to commune with God, where he speaks to the reverent thinker,
 Calm with look of command as a kindly sire to his son speaks,
 Mild as a mother when she unfolds her love to her daughters ;
 Far from the blinding dust and confounding roar of the great towns,
 Rattling of cars, and babbling of fools, and battling of factions.

Turn we now to the kings. They lie behind in the chapel
 Piled by the politic Henry, bifrontal Janus of England,
 Summing the feuds of the Past, and launching the fates of the Future,
 Thrifty and scant for himself, but with large and liberal service
 Heaping memorial wealth on the blessed shrine of the Virgin.
 Beautiful wonder of stone, with airy lightness uprising,
 Slim as the stalk of a flower, or the trellised face of a cottage ;
 Strong as the stem of a breeze-nursed pine on the face of the big Ben.
 Here stand with me, and read the great stone Epos of England,
 Story of kings in majestic array, more potent than ever
 Sate with sceptre from Jove in the lion-girt gates of Mycenæ,
 Strong with the strength of the Northman in brain, and brawn
 tremendous,

Reining disorderly times with unpitiful mastery. Lo, there
 Lies the magnificent robber, as Romans were robbers in old times,
 Longshank Edward, who laid his rapacious grasp on the Cymri,
 Claimed their homes for his fiefs, and by drawing, hanging, and quartering,
 Crushed the pride of their princes. But not the Celt of the Northland
 Lent his soul submit to be beaten and hammered and shapen
 Into this hammerer's mould. Though bent, he might not be broken :
 Fallen, he fell but to rise ; the breath that blows from the big Bens
 Breeds not a nation of slaves ; but erect and tall as a pine stands
 Flouting the Borean blast, rock-rooted, and hard as the heather,
 Stood unvanquished the Scot. The haughty invader at Bannock
 Shrank from the axe of the Bruce, and all his imperious legions
 Fled from the soil of the free, like the wreathed dust which the thunder's
 Sudden tornado upwhirls. So perish whoever would proudly
 Strike the stars with his crown, and trample the weak and the lowly
 'Neath the law of his heels ! Yet Force must be in the complex
 Strife of untempered things, and War, to compel the swarming
 Rush of antagonist lives to gather their powers together,
 Worked for an orderly end by a high-controlling commander.
 Never was nation made strong, nor Greece, nor Rome, nor the Hebrew,
 Cradled in sweetness of peace, and cushioned on pillows of softness.
 Stern is the school of war ; and mothers will weep on the green fields
 Watered with blood of their sons, and maidens will weep for their loved
 ones ;

But 'tis meet that we fight for the goods that we prize most dearly,
 Prized the most when we measure their worth by the lives of our dearest.

Peace is the cry of the hour: and FREEDOM, large freedom to gather
 Pelf, and weave for display life's glittering show to the gazer.
 War was life to the mightful array of the Edwards and Henries,—
 Life, and business, and sport, and a grand pulsation of manhood,
 Nurse of valorous hearts, that, strong in the challenge of danger,
 Revelled in doughty delight. If France were Frankish or English,
 In the far-viewed account that sums the balance of peoples,
 Little is noted; but France and England grew strong in the struggle;
 Little, if York or Lancaster sate on the throne of the Norman—
 Much, that the manful will, and the stout-souled self-assertion,
 Reigned in the thought of the monarch, and braced the nerve of the people.
 Peace is good; but not the peace that rots in indulgence,
 Lazy and languid and loose; but peace that comes when the thunder
 Clears the air from the perilous taint that poisons the breathing.
 So she too, with the sword in one hand, God's law in the other,
 Stood, the umpire of creeds, high-hearted daughter of Tudor;
 Mighty she stood to withstand the insolent ban of the Pontiff,
 Laming the arm of the State, and strangling the thought of the people,—
 Mighty to stir the helmless drift of the feverish millions
 Clutching this fancy and that, in dreams of godly excitement:
 She, with sword in hand, stood firm as a dexterous rider
 Gives the spur to the mild, and the rein to the mettlesome charger.
 Said He not so, the Christ whose blood was shed for the nations?
 Spake He not thus: Not peace I came to bring, but a sword drawn
 Keen in defence of the right! Even so, from struggle to struggle,
 England wrenched her rights from the mightful hand of the stronger.
 Popes she laid at her feet; and, leagued with priestcraft, the Stuart
 Laid his head on the block, or, blind with plunges of madness,
 Fled from a land uncustomed to bear the tread of the tyrant.
 Here let their memory rest, with this grave lesson to monarchs,—
 Rulers are lords of the people, but Law is the lord of the rulers.

This be enough for to-day! The eye is wearied with seeing,
 Weary with writing the writer, and weary the reader with reading:
 Weariness here is at home; the langour of hot-spurred livers,
 Hurried from show to show, to banquet, ball, and reception.
 Glaring of midnight lights, and sweatful sorrows, and shoulder
 Crushed on sorrowful shoulder, and multitudinous motley
 Babble of meaningless tongues. I'll write you to-morrow,—with one thing
 Only as postscript to-day. I must not omit the fateful
 Travelling Stone of the Scots. I'm a Scot with the best, and with worship
 Saw, and kissed the stone, as pious Romanists kiss the
 Toe of St Peter in Rome. The stone, you know, has a story
 Reaching from East to West in wonderful concatenation.
 First it served as a pillow to Jacob, the sire of the Hebrews,

Then when he saw in a dream the miraculous ladder with angels
Rising with prayers from earth, and down-descending with blessings.
There at Bethel it lay, till, sold to the land of the Pharaohs,
Joseph called his brethren to find a home by the Nile-stream's
Seven-mouthed loamy expanse; the stone came with them to Egypt,
Pregnant with fates of the Future. The son of Pelasgic Cecrops,
Godlike Gathelus, was borne in ships to Memphis, and married
Scota, the daughter of Ramses, and lived in palatial splendour
Like to the gods, for a time; but anon, with God-fearing foresight,
Fled from the direful plagues by Moses outpoured on the hardened
Heart of the Pharaoh; he crossed the mid-sea's turbulent billow
Northward to Spain, and built the famous town of Brigantia,
Taking with him the stone, whereon for long generations
Seated, Cecropian kings dispensed the statutes of Themis.
Centuries rolled on centuries unrecorded, till Milo
Reigned in Spain, a Scot, a man of mighty achievement.
He from a bevy of sons picked forth the boldest, whose name was
Simon Breck, and sent him across the billows of Biscay
Northward to fasten his yoke on the neck of the untamed Irish.
He, sure pledge of success, took with him the stone, and placed it
High on the hill of Tara. The fateful slab remained there
Hundreds and hundreds of years divinely guarded, till Fergus
First-named king of the Scots, three hundred years before Christ,
Bravely in face of the Borean blasts and the dread Corryvreckan,
Bore it, and planted it safe, where the high-towered bulk of Dunstaffnage
Rises near to the rush of the tortured narrows of Connell.
There not long it remained,—for Fergus, with pious prevision,
Fearing the Danes, the roving robbers, the merciless sea-kings,
Carried the stone, the seal of rightful sway, to Iona's
Fair white-sanded beach, the sacred port of Columba.
There unharmed it lay till Kenneth, the son of Alpin,
Laid the arm of his strength on the subject neck of the unkempt
Hordes of barbarian Picts. The stone was carried to Scone then,
Carried and set in a chair, where seated, all Scotia's kings were
Crowned in the name of the Lord on the joyful feast of St Andrew.
There the Palladium rested, the fateful pledge of the kingdom,
Holy reputed by all, till Edward, rapacious Longshanks,
Stole it, weening to cheat the Fates by the sleight of his king-craft.
Foolish! not he from Scotland could filch the sceptre; but Scotland,
Making her home on the Thames, where the wonderful chapel uprises,
Sent the Stuart, her blood, to sit on the chair of MacAlpin,
Unsubdued, undivorced from the fateful honour of Albyn.
Now, farewell, my good friend. When free from the trammels of business,
Leave the talk of the day, with its foam and bubble, and spend a
Thoughtful hour with me 'mid the storied stones of the Abbey.

FALL OF A MINISTRY OF VACILLATION AND BLOOD.

OUT of the many reproaches with which history will brand the Administration from which this country has just been delivered, it is difficult to select any one from which it should take its distinguishing epithet. It has been remarkable for heavy taxation, and a wasteful expenditure; for continual bickering and quarrelling with foreign Powers; for ignorance and vacillation in diplomatic business, and in warlike operations; for neglect of the interests of the Empire. Yet, though all these stigmas must stand to its discredit wherever it may be described in detail, for brief citation, or in its epitaph, it may be characterised by the adjective *bloody* more aptly than by any other. The choice of the word is justified, because the Administration, from its formation to its close, never ceased to be engaged in useless and unprofitable, though destructive, wars; and because these wars were in direct contradiction to the professions and promises by means of which its members obtained office.

If there was one undesirable condition more than another of which the late Ministers boasted that they would keep us clear, and which they endeavoured to exhibit as the besetting sin of their political adversaries, it was War. In censoriousness and cant their sway began. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. They were not content to object to the policy of their adversaries because it was inferior to their own in sagacity, foresight, or profit, but they denounced it as *wicked*—as proceeding from most unworthy motives, and tending to most sinful ends. They fought not as fair antagonists, but as Phari-

sees; their assumption of superior virtue was intolerable; and, now that they have come to a period of their self-glorification, and gone down certainly not “justified rather than the other,” a feeling more than ordinarily exultant, a delight in the humiliation of such arrant pretenders, is scarcely to be repressed. It is said, by some who profess to know the secrets of their end, that they prayed for death, so inextricably had they committed themselves and compromised their country; and that, refusing to have their wretched days prolonged, they welcomed the first deadly weapon that presented itself, and from it accepted their fate.

But the fate, as it seems, is to be only *mors janua vitæ*—a suspension of official life to be devoted to unscrupulous agitation, and to result, after the next election, in a return to office on the shoulders of the multitude with undreamt-of glory and triumph. The country is to be convulsed once more, not only by orators preparing the way of their prophet and conjuring with his name, but possibly by the Mahdi himself, the arch-priest of deception and ruin, the living ambiguity, him who touched nothing that he did not bungle, the late (let us rejoice in that word *late*) Prime Minister. And is it possible that such a crusade can succeed among intelligent people? No greater affliction than this man, with his perpetual tongue, his slimy cant, his ever-shifting maxims, his infirm purposes, his costly incapacities, his imperfect perception of facts, has for many a decade fallen upon the nation. He has checked progress to a serious extent, as is already felt in very many directions: the mischief done in this way by him

will not be obliterated for fifty years. Confidence between class and class, and between man and man, has been destroyed by his means. His ungenerous and unjust treatment of public servants of approved ability and fidelity—whom he evidently regards as mere machines to be used, and if necessary sacrificed, for the convenience of himself and his party—has depressed loyalty and national spirit. By becoming a demagogue, and practising as such, he degraded the office of First Minister of the Crown. Order has been discouraged; enterprise has been checked; national prosperity has been hindered; ideas which no staid or thoughtful community would for a moment entertain have been brought within the range of practical politics; and if he be not solely responsible for these four results, they are so far due to him that they could not have been induced without his active aid. The quantity of evil which this incarnate loquacity has brought upon the United Kingdom is fearful to contemplate. Had he succumbed peaceably, it would have been ungenerous to heap rebuke on him; but he is making himself ready for battle, and asking for no quarter.

If now we turn from the deposed and discredited men to the state in which they have left our affairs, what disorder, what confusion do we behold! The first question which is called forth by such a survey is, How could any set of men in five short years so complicate things, so reverse all system? Routine alone, where it has for long had free course, will generally by its inert force nullify in large measure the meddling of a block-head; but here we have evidence of a disturbing and distracting genius, against which no system could maintain itself, no method

could survive. When a nation which is confessedly wealthy, energetic, and of world-spread relations, cannot bring forward one adherent, what shall we say of the imprudence with which she has been governed? Even that little wisdom which, according to the sayings of the cynic chancellor, suffices to keep the world in *equilibrio*, must have been wanting here. And the Ministry which could not in her need produce for Great Britain one backer, had set itself, forsooth, to create and cherish the concert of Europe. Perverse Europe! or presumptuous charlatans! which do we exclaim? Perhaps a more modest aim, sought with common-sense sincerity, might have been more successful. But the sarcasm which might have been levelled at the foiled concert-makers, is lost in the reprobation which men of all ranks and nations are pouring on the humane apostles of peace—who began their ministry by drawing the sword, who have never sheathed their weapon, who have poured out blood like water for no ascertainable object, often without the plea of justice and policy, always without the ability to point to any human society or being that has benefited by the wholesale carnage of which they have been guilty. No red Sagamore ever authorised such wanton slaughter: we must go back to Timour and Attila in order to find its parallel. There have been ministries before who relentlessly pursued a great or a coveted end, regardless of the material or moral cost at which they worked; but here we have a set of rulers who never having—certainly never keeping—any end whatever in view, wantonly violated every just principle, every merciful feeling. Lord Granville was thought to have assisted his hard-pressed party

by the invention of the parable of the umbrella and the rain: oh! that he would expound to us the application of this saying to Egypt, and point out what the face of the sky was which indicated the opening of the flood-gates of gore, and what the aspect which gave notice to decamp and to leave Egypt to any fate that might befall her. There will never be an advocate, as we fear, better able to relieve Britain of the burden which weighs on her with regard to Egypt than Lord Granville is. As long as history is read, the page which shall record our inconsiderate inhuman doings there will testify to our dire dishonour.

From seas of blood it is a relief to divert the glance upon mere waste of lucre; and yet it is only by such comparison that the squandering of means is an endurable subject of attention. For we Britons get our money hardly enough, and love not to see it scattered for the amusement of fatuity or the tricks of empiricism. In parting with their late pretentious rulers, our people will not fail to remember how, for five years past, where they were promised economy and a tender pull on their pockets, they have been subjected to increased—which has now swelled to very heavy—taxation; and this although declining trade and unfruitful seasons have left us already needy, and unprepared for such additional demand. It would have been hard to bear such taxes, if even we had received value for them, realisable hereafter, if not presently; but we have not, we are not to have, any equivalent whatever. The money is gone; and we are not only poorer materially, but we are morally impoverished by the expenditure. Any one comparing the Egypt of to-day with the Egypt of 1882, will see clearly that our expenditure

of the last three years has only made matters worse there. We have wasted our money, and entailed upon ourselves a heritage of shame and perplexity. The story of Gordon and Khartoum is written against us for all time; and Egypt, as of old, is the broken reed “whereon, if a man lean, it shall go into his hand and pierce it.” We had wasted money before in the Transvaal; but that did not prevent our useless outlay in Egypt. And when we had both South Africa and Egypt for warnings, we again threw away millions, not for victory, not for safety, but to incur positive loss of territory for our ally, and of reputation for ourselves on the north-west frontier of India. The finances of Egypt, over which we exercised entire control from 1882 until very lately, are in no better case than our own; hints of Egyptian insolvency have been given by Ministers in the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to force members into approval of measures about which they were hesitating. Egypt, therefore, has been, if she does not continue to this day to be, face to face with insolvency. These things prove that money as well as blood has been recklessly squandered by our late unworthy rulers.

If, leaving finance, we pass to foreign policy, there is no *per contra*—nothing to set against the damning records of campaigns and accounts. The late Premier, while he was moving heaven and earth for, and, as it proved, winning, office, thought proper to wantonly insult some of the Continental Powers: Austria in especial he reviled and pointed his finger at, as a State deserving severest reprobation. So little is his skill, however, that his fawning has answered no better than his denunciation. France, which he would have conciliated, is

no better disposed than Austro-Hungary, which he openly affronted. He has contrived so to conduct minor negotiations with Germany as to win her distrust and contempt. Turkey he long ago vilified with all the rancour of an inexhaustible vocabulary; Turkey, therefore, has ranked as an unfriendly Power, and swelled the deplorable list of ill-wishers from whose alienation has sprung our most recent calamity, our deepest diplomatic disgrace. There seems to have been in all his foreign dealing a priggish conceit, and a departure from established practices, which caused suspicion and gave offence—effects which were only heightened by the subserviency in every direction evinced by him.

Russia, whom he had basely flattered and vainly attempted to win to his side, seeing him sinking day by day deeper into friendless folly, hurried forward some long-cherished plots of hers, in the hope of making a great success out of his weakness and perplexity. That Russia could have a fair occasion of coercing or overreaching him was due entirely to his own obstinacy and neglect of opportunity. Five years ago, while Russia was yet a long way off from the confines of Afghanistan, our Government was fully warned of the collision to which the march of events was already pointing; but it refused to make any provision for the coming struggle, or to recognise a danger which was palpable to all but the dullest intellects. The sad, the discreditable consequence has been that, while we have been left weak and unprepared, while our Ministers have remained uncertain even as to what steps should be taken for our security, the wily foe, clear in his views, inflexible in his purposes, has come up with giant strides to the line of contact, and, since he arrived

there, has been making his way by force and by subtlety, to which we have had neither force nor skill to oppose.

The obstinate neglect to provide, while we had time, for the security of India, is a dereliction of duty which the country, appalled by the presence of danger and the imminence of a horrid war, is at length beginning to see in all its enormity. Five precious years have been worse than lost in this respect, because we have been during that time absolutely undoing, instead of adding to, our defences. The "strong man armed" might have smiled at Russian intrigues and attempted robberies; but the neglected, weak, exposed frontier was simply a standing temptation to the invader to come on and profit by the infatuation of the owners of India. The more the nation continues to consider this glaring neglect—persisted in despite the plainest and repeated warnings from able and accomplished observers—the more closely it must approximate this momentous remissness to high treason. It is scarcely one of those lapses which may be condoned as errors of judgment; for no possible advantage can have accrued to the country from leaving ourselves naked while grand and palpable calamities were invited by our doing so. Notwithstanding the pressing perplexities of the present, the country will not, as we trust, lose sight of this grievous fault in the past, but will make the guilty grievously to answer for it.

But whatever ground of accusation may lie in the more distant past, the last three months have seen developed folly, incapacity, and irresolution enough to confound the late miserable Cabinet, without the aid of other numerous transgressions standing to its debit. The unenviable distinction

belongs to this concourse of imbecilities that it has accumulated twenty crimes, each by itself worthy of death, while it has but one worthless attainted life to render up in expiation of such multiplied offences. And, in sooth, this terrified retreat before Muscovite rudeness is the meanest, if not the most criminal, of the catalogue. It does not appear that the Russians themselves had, at the beginning of the series of squabbles, any idea of the extent to which British obsequiousness might be counted upon. They felt their way delicately, unable to conceive the "capacity for boot" which distinguished their heroic adversaries. A short experience warmed up their confidence with wondrous speed; and from the first tender dent on the small-clothes up to that "most complicated kick" (we borrow the expression from Dickens) delivered at Penj-deh, their apprehension of the case grew apace. The question soon changed from How much will they bear? to How can we satisfy such gluttons? But enough: the date of the miserable story is too recent for a detail of the passages to be in place here. We have to consider the outcome so far as it has proceeded; and never, never since we were a nation has such a record of grovelling, recreancy, and folly stained our annals. Truly it is a privilege to be "done for" by the Great Liberal Party!

It has been said, on behalf of Mr Gladstone's Government, that it was too much occupied with great changes and regulations at home to be able to give fixed attention to foreign politics, therefore it is not fair to judge him and his colleagues by what happened abroad only. Very well: but we may examine their doings at home and not find things a whit better than

they were beyond the island seas. Before they took office, ample warning was given them that Ireland was in a very unquiet state, but of this warning they chose to take no notice. Mr Gladstone, even in the teeth of the warning, declared that Ireland was in a contented and peaceable condition. By-and-by, after no very long interval, came the outbreak of violence and crime; but this was not, up to the end of the year, repressed. Law-abiding, quietly disposed people were not specially protected, and murderers and other criminals used the interval so allowed them to attack life and property all over the land. When, at length, the Legislature saw fit to interfere, it did so at first by passing an Act which, by the subsequent confession of the Prime Minister, did not fulfil its intention, and which was consequently allowed to expire. It was followed by one of the most extraordinary measures ever resorted to by the Government of a civilised country—namely, a treaty or arrangement made between Ministers of the Crown and disaffected leaders, who were described by the Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland as "men steeped to the lips in treason." The existence of such a compact proved that the Government which was a party to it set at nought one of the first purposes for which government exists; and that it was a rash, fanciful Government, breaking loose from all established ways, and eminently unfit to be trusted with the interests of a great or of any country. Of course the Kilmainham Treaty was as useless as it was absurd and mischievous. Crime in Ireland increased again; but it was not until the Irish Secretary and his deputy had been slain in a public place in open daylight that a stringent and effectual Coercion Act was passed, the

Government being under the strongest pressure from public opinion. Its unwillingness to protect inoffensive subjects, to repress crime, and to show itself as the prop and defence of order, is an indelible stain.

If it was contemptible as an executive power with regard to Ireland, it was no less so in its legislative capacity. The Land Act and the other measures which it proposed and carried through Parliament were unjust in principle, and in no wise capable of effecting their intention. The Land Act arbitrarily and iniquitously interfered with freedom of contract, and amerced the owners of land: the new laws, one and all, failed to produce content or to restore order, as is manifest from the evidence of witnesses not likely to exaggerate failure. The late Irish Secretary declared only a few months since that Irish land is practically unsaleable; and the outgoing Lord-Lieutenant has let us know that Ireland cannot be kept quiet without a coercive law. Those, after innumerable disorders and scandals, are the results of the action of the fallen Administration towards Ireland. The Liberals leave that country far worse than they found it.

It is not a small item to the discredit of the defunct Ministry that it permitted its members to solicit the favour of classes—not always respectable classes—by the utterance of sentiments and opinions in relation to matters of State which, as a body, the Cabinet did not approve; and by exciting vulgar passions which, when stirred to action, cannot but imperil the general security. We have had the sad experience of Cabinet Ministers giving public expression to doctrines and sympathies which, as they well know, can never be seriously adopted in a well-ordered

State, and which are simply baits and fictions to propitiate rascaldom. The Have-nots in this country are at present strongly inclined to mulct and strip those who possess property. A Government worthy of being so called, as it would be bound to repress active socialism and communism, so ought it to discountenance and denounce communistic and socialistic precepts and sentiments. But members of Mr Gladstone's Government allowed themselves, and were allowed by him, a licence in this respect which stamps the whole Government as revolutionary. We may add that it was little else than a revolutionary proceeding in the Prime Minister, her Majesty's principal adviser, to be stumping the country as he did last summer, and endeavouring to force by popular commotion the passage of a Franchise Bill without redistribution of seats. That the good sense of the people prevented them from following him in this matter does not in any way lessen the guilt and indecency of the attempt.

Another charge, a serious charge, which we have to make, though it directly affects only the Prime Minister, yet by inference and reflection sullies all who have chosen to be connected with him. We allude to the slight regard which Mr Gladstone has persistently shown for truth. He has tampered with the truth by ambiguities, by misstatements, by suggestions, and other tricks of rhetoric, without laying himself open to the imputation of direct falsehood; though in some instances, as we fear, the imputation might have been made and sustained, as in the words concerning "a rope round his neck," which he unwarrantably attributed to the Marquis of Salisbury, and as in the statement which he very lately made to the House of Commons to

the effect that the Russian Government had undertaken not to advance its troops farther, when in fact that Government had undertaken no such thing. It is true that he was always ready with some more or less colourable explanation of the deception after it had served its turn, but these aberrations occurred too frequently to have been the effects of accidents or mistakes; and there is only too much reason to apprehend that oratorical effect was with him a study far more than accuracy of statement.

Such being the reputation which the Gladstone Administration had made for itself during its five years of misrule, it is not astonishing that, with a general election in view and only a few months off, it should desire to cast upon other shoulders the net of perplexity in which it stood involved, and try to pose before the electors as honest, able men out of work. As if, forsooth, the mischief that it has done, and the depth to which it has degraded the country, could be condoned or forgotten in six months—or in six years! The shift, however, was worth trying, though it was but as the straw to which the drowning will cling; and this, especially, since the Ministry was terrified by the thought of an unpopular Budget, of a Peace Preservation Act for Ireland, and of one or two other difficulties which it would have had to face if it had continued in office another month. It must be admitted, therefore, that the best was made of a very bad business, and the time adroitly chosen for scuttling when the discredited and morally bankrupt confederacy made off after a defeat on the proposal to tax beer. Nothing else that they did while in office showed so much sharpness as the expedient by which they extricated themselves from office.

Many have said for them that they carefully and deliberately arranged their own defeat,—that their whip purposely understated the division that was impending, so that members might not feel it incumbent on them to leave their pleasure, or the air of the country, to ensure Ministers a majority in the House of Commons. Undoubtedly we have the evidence of the members themselves who were so unhappily absent, that they did not (whatever may have been the intention of the whip) understand the gravity of the occasion. On the other hand, the whip has declared that he sounded the alarm most distinctly. One cannot help believing that, if all hands had been earnest in wishing to ward off a defeat, the Ministerial party would have mustered in sufficient strength; but, wherever the misleading may have been, we have read a declaration of Sir William Harcourt, *on his honour*, that the Government did not designedly bring about their overthrow, and so we must put away the idea that they did so. It still, however, remains a fact that they were over-ready to seize the chance, once chance had favoured them, and to hurry away from their responsibilities with an alacrity which, considering the circumstances, was not to their credit.

Whatever were the difficulties from which our adversaries have fled, they were of their own creating, and would not, if there had been any sort of high feeling in the Cabinet, have been evaded by the first loophole that presented itself to their panic-stricken haste. However the defeat may have been brought about, it still remained beyond question that the Government possessed a good majority in the lower House, and could have maintained itself in office till the end of the ses-

sion. In answer to which argument, it is answered on behalf of Ministers, "Why did the Conservatives divide against us and turn us out if they were not prepared to take our places?" The reply to which question is, that the Conservatives opposed the Budget because they could not approve of it, and that they *have taken office*. The reflection still remains, that Mr Gladstone hastened to throw up office while he might have continued to hold it; and that nothing short of absolute inability to carry on the Government could have justified his resignation before the general election. According to the letter of precedents, he had the right to haul down his colours, and save himself from further trouble about his own entanglements on being outvoted (no matter by what management or want of management) in the House of Commons. Mr Gladstone's retirement from his post, though we fear that faint-heartedness had much to do with it, may not have proceeded altogether from cowardice: delight at prospect of the difficulties in which he would lodge his opponents, if they should be sufficiently devoted to their Sovereign and their country to gather up the tangled skeins which he had so recklessly thrown down, no doubt influenced him as well as desperation. But neither in the escape from his involvements, nor in his exultation at the appalling difficulties which he has bequeathed to his successors, is he to be envied by honourable minds.

Our gracious Sovereign, fully informed of the condition of her dominions and her foreign relations, saw proper to accept the resignation of Mr Gladstone's Government, yielding to its recreancy, but taking thought for the good of

her empire. Thus the blood-guilty, wasteful Administration is no more. Her Majesty has been further pleased to impose upon the Marquis of Salisbury the distasteful duty of forming a Ministry and carrying on her Government—a duty which, amid such circumstances, only loyalty and patriotism could induce a statesman to undertake. The call of the Crown has, as we all know, been promptly and gallantly responded to. It is a long time, a very long time, since a party leader has been desired to take the helm of the State with affairs so arduous and complicated, and under conditions so adverse. The Parliament cannot be dissolved immediately, and it must be dissolved very shortly—say in six months. For half a year, therefore, the new Administration must perform their duties, harassed by a hostile majority in the House of Commons, which, though it did not muster in force for the support of the Budget, will be sure to do so for the purpose of thwarting a Conservative Government. No doubt Lord Salisbury might have made the hostile majority a good plea for refusing office now, as Mr Disraeli did in 1873. Then, as now, the Conservatives had obtained a majority in the Commons, but they did not, because they had outvoted the Radicals, feel bound to relieve them of office. It is not any obligation arising out of the vote, it is a sense of duty alone, which has compelled the new Minister to assume the post of labour and difficulty; and the country will, it is hoped, appreciate the sacrifice of himself and followers which he has made for the public good. Probably her Majesty found that every hour during which the direction of affairs might have been left to the late Cabinet was attended

with risks which it would have been madness to encounter. She must, at any cost, save her dominions from such jeopardy. Thus her Majesty has relieved us of Mr Gladstone; and thus Lord Salisbury is in the unenviable position of reclaiming a State which has been misguided to the verge of ruin, and of performing this crushing duty under the obstructive action of an adverse majority, who will first baffle his efforts and then rejoice in his discomfiture.

We may have to wait six months for the knowledge of the people's choice between parties; but there will be no delay, it is to be hoped, in stopping the sweep towards ruin in which the possessions and relations of the Empire are involved. Our Indian dominion must be made secure; and all our neighbours in the East, without exception, must be given to understand that what we hold there we mean to keep against every comer, be he who he may. Such a determination, maintained with firmness and dignity, will command respect—a tribute long withheld from British rights and claims. It may cost us a little steady assertion of ourselves to do away with the character for yielding everything and for pocketing-up wrongs which we have acquired under Mr Gladstone. We must be reinstated in the goodwill of the great Powers of Europe; and no doubt we shall be so reinstated as soon as it may be understood that we give up the priggish pretence of conducting all business on principles too high-flown for imitation and comprehension. A clear policy must be devised and carried out with regard to Egypt,—that unfortunate country which has suffered so grievously through our aimlessness and indecision. Whether it be determined to smash

the Mahdi or to draw in our power, let there be a definite purpose, and let it be steadily carried out. It will be some time, as we fear, before the heavy sums expended by Mr Gladstone's Government, without return of any kind, can be made good; but we can be, and we shall be, preserved from getting deeper into debt without clear and adequate cause.

As to Ireland, ruined Ireland, he would be a bold man who should name any specific by which that unhappy country could receive sudden, or even early, benefit. With a hostile majority in the present Parliament, largely composed of discontented Irishmen, it seems next to impossible that Lord Salisbury's Cabinet should be able, before the general election, to enact any law for its amelioration. The protection of its peaceable population, and the due punishment of violence there, cannot, as we fear, be provided for, until a new Parliament shall place a Government in a situation to deal with this most important matter. We may hope that, at the least, the existing law will be so administered as to avert anarchy; and we may be sure that nothing will be done to willfully increase the present discontent and misery. Ireland is the one subject on which, at Lord Salisbury's accession to power, it is impossible to feel any lively hope of improvement. It has been too grossly mismanaged, and quacked too entirely beyond the reach of ordinary remedies, for recovery to be easy, even if it be practicable.

The new Conservative Government is not, as we write for press, definitely announced; and we can only say, concerning such offices as are understood to have been offered and accepted, that there is promise of vigorous and able service. The Treasury bench

in the Commons will be occupied for the most part by Ministers who are new to it, and who have yet to make their official reputations. Under the leading of Sir M. Hicks-Beach they will have experience to guide their ardour; and the best wish we can form for them is that they may entirely justify Lord Salisbury's selection. But we must cease. We took up the pen to congratulate our readers on being delivered from Mr Gladstone and his heterogeneous Cabinet, rather than to indulge in special predictions concerning a Ministry which is, as we write, not out of the embryonic stage.

While, however, contemplating the Conservatives in the Commons, as they are about to be led, we cannot repress a sigh of regret and reverence for the leader now to be seen on the accustomed bench no more, and no longer to be known to us as Sir Stafford Northcote. Never has there been a party chief in that House who, through a long, diligent, and useful career, has been more kindly and honourably regarded by foes as well as friends. A statesman of an elder school, it was his tendency to grow only more gentle and urbane the more the assembly about him seemed degenerating towards licence and tumult. But though his moderate and admirable demeanour in Parliament is his special characteristic, and therefore presents itself most readily on first thought of him, his many admirable qualities as a statesman, and the ability and devotion with which he performed his difficult duties, and shone as a guide and example to his followers, are fully recognised now, and will

long be respectfully remembered. Almost the last public news that we receive is that this true Englishman has thought fit, under no pressure from any quarter, to put aside the promptings of his own honest and justifiable ambition, in order to facilitate the construction of a Ministry by his friend, and to give cohesion and stability to his party in the Lower House. This noble conduct is of a piece with the whole tenor of his life, his public spirit, his abnegation of self. Our readers, we feel assured, will rejoice as we do in the knowledge that her Majesty has recognised such devotion and long service by conferring on him an earldom—an honour usually bestowed as a first peerage only on statesmen who have headed Governments. Sir Stafford Northcote is, therefore, by the source of all social honour, placed in the rank of prime ministers. Long may he enjoy, and be useful in, the new sphere to which he has been called!

Let us wish, too, every success and much good fortune to Lord Salisbury and his Cabinet in carrying out the difficult and discouraging work which they have so patriotically undertaken. It is anything but an occasion for gratifying personal ambition, anything but a great chance for a party; it is for the Queen and country only that the experiment has been essayed. This public spirit the people, as we hope, will recognise now, and will stamp with their approval when they shall be called upon a few months hence to make what will probably be the most momentous decision that has been required from them in this century.

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THE CRACK OF DOOM.

CHAPTER I.

ONE tempestuous evening in the nineteenth century—for reasons that will be obvious as we proceed, the reader must not be exactly particular in the matter of dates in this story—a rosy-cheeked old gentleman sat in his library, toasting his toes. Well within reach of his left arm was a little round table with a tray on it, supporting a small kettle, a bottle of curious shape with a silver label, a sugar-bowl, half a lemon, and a glass more than half full of a steaming liquid. The chair was low and comfortable, and he sometimes lay back in it and looked at the ceiling, and sometimes bent forward and looked at the fire. In passing from the one attitude to the other, he generally paused for a moment to raise the glass to his lips, and thoughtfully, but not without visible satisfaction, imbibe some portion of the contents.

To look at Mr Millerby—for
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this was the rosy old man's name—you would not have said that any action of his was likely to disturb the equilibrium of society. It was a round beaming face, the face of a man who slept well o' nights, not disdaining a little artificial aid to slumber, yet not exceeding such limits as the faculty would approve of in the case of a hale old eupeptic gentleman. The eyes were not large, and occasionally they assumed a sly expression—a sign that Mr Millerby, with all his brave show of benevolent fatness, was not predestined for a prey to the lean and hungry. He was, indeed, a successful man of business and a shrewd.

There was apparently something on Mr Millerby's mind that would not allow him to enjoy his sleeping draught with the expansive tranquillity which the good man generally felt at this period of his well-spent day. After gravely staring

at the fire for a little, he shook his head and muttered, and reached back and took another sip; and after he had reclined for a little in rapt contemplation of the ceiling, he shook his head and muttered, and reached forward and took another sip. "Yes, truly, our life is surrounded by terrible possibilities. 'Our fate, hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize us.'" These were the mutterings to which his lips kept time. Then, as he put out his hand to the glass, the cloud of grave anxiety cleared off his face, a cheerful, beaming, and resolute look took its place, and as he put the glass down, he gave a look round the room and said aloud—"It is a duty. It must be done. It shall be done." Soon this triumphant expression changed, and the face of Mr Millerby became as the face of a man immersed in quick business calculations. "I must find out what it can be done for," he said to himself. "Yes, truly, the possibilities are terrible." And he mused over them for a little. Then he roused himself again to take another pull at the liquor, and fortify his resolution by repeating—"It is a duty. It must be done. It shall be done."

What had occurred to disturb the good man? He was a large shipowner, who went on the principle of never insuring, and, much to the envy of rivals in business, had never lost a ship. They were always prophesying that sooner or later he must come to grief; and if they had seen his restlessness this evening, at an hour when he was generally at peace with himself and with the world, they would have been convinced that the evil day had come at last.

Yet they would have been wrong. Mr Millerby's breast this evening was not preoccupied with selfish cares, with fears of im-

pending disaster in business. When he muttered of terrible possibilities, his thoughts had taken a much wider sweep. He was thinking, in fact, of an impending cosmic catastrophe, of the threatened destruction of the world by fire. And the resolution he had come to in view of this awful possibility—meditating over the fact that no man can tell when the crash may come—was to build an astronomical observatory.

The reader may smile, but Mr Millerby was a man of simple faith, and a Biblical student of a type not yet extinct even in these days of scientific enlightenment. The Bible was his favourite study in the intervals of business, especially the prophetic books and the Apocalypse. He knew neither Greek, nor Latin, nor Hebrew. The words of the authorised English version were to him inspired. He brought to bear upon the sacred narrative a mind singularly ingenious and acute, teeming with fresh fancies, untrammelled by commentators; and he found an inexhaustible fund of lively interest for his evenings in tracing far-off intimations, or discovering and fanning into flame the light of obscure symbols, types, lessons.

And this was how he thought of erecting an observatory. Pondering over the Opening of the Seals in the Apocalypse, he had come to the conclusion that six of the seals had already been opened, and that the final judgment was at hand. Mr Millerby took every word of the prophetic vision literally, only applying them as descriptions of natural phenomena; and when he read of the hail and fire that were cast upon the earth, and the great mountain burning with fire that was cast into the sea, and the great star, flaming as it were a lamp

that fell from heaven, when the seventh seal was opened and blast after blast from the Trumpeters of Doom echoed over the world,—as he pondered what this vision meant, and how it might be accomplished by natural agencies, Mr Millerby became convinced that comets were the appointed instruments of divine wrath, and that the day was not far distant when one of these cosmic prodigies might be descried making straight for the earth on its terrible mission.

No great scholar was this wealthy and pious shipowner to know whether St John's revelation had ever before been so interpreted, or what men of science thought about the risks of collision between the earth and a comet, or the probable results in the event of a collision. He was a man of simple faith, whose belief in the rectitude of his instincts had been fortified by the unbroken success of his commercial undertakings. This success had also established in his mind the firm conviction that he was a favoured object of Providence, a chosen instrument for the execution of great designs. The interpretation and the duty thereby imposed on him had flashed into his mind this evening all of a sudden, with such startling force that he felt at once that he had been specially spoken to. It was as if a wall limiting his vision had suddenly fallen and opened up a new and awful prospect of the uncertainty of man's tenure of existence on the earth. The appalling risks to which the great globe was exposed as it circled and spun through space, with multitudes of other ponderous bodies whirling at inconceivable speed on all sides of it, burst upon his imagination with astounding suddenness. For a moment he

was crushed and awed, but the next moment a sweet and consoling thought came to the rescue of his dazed senses and paralysed mind. The revelation had been given him for a purpose. He had been called to act as watchman for the human race, to spy out the coming destruction from afar, to give mankind warning and time for preparation.

One often wonders what the angels think of us and our great thoughts. Mr Millerby was an ordinary-looking enough specimen of a prosperous middle-class self-made merchant as he sat in what he was pleased to call his library—stocked with books almost as wooden as the solid oak shelves—toasting his toes and drinking a glass of hot whisky-and-water before going to bed. What matter if he did look alternately grave and radiant, according as his mutterings were of awful possibilities or of a solemn duty and a determination to perform it? You would not have supposed, to see the comfortable fat old man in his easy-chair, that his conceptions of possibilities and duties ranged beyond shipwrecks and insurance premiums, or that he conceived of himself at that moment as an honoured mortal to whom had been delegated the special care of the highest interests of the human race. His clerks would have chuckled for a week at the idea. Yet Solomon in all his glory had not a profounder sense of his own consequence than Mr Millerby in all humility entertained as he sat there sipping his whisky-and-water. The storm that roared in the trees outside did not make him tremble for his uninsured ships. His thoughts were in the immensities, freed as if by miracle from the ordinary bounds of place and time. The sound of the

storm mingled with his vision of rushing and hurtling orbs, and the cries of men terror-stricken before the rent heavens and the coming doom. Yes—he had been chosen to warn them; and his benevolent heart glowed and was lifted up within him as he thought of his high mission.

Now tell me, O disenchanting Muse of Psychological Analysis! what earthly circumstances combined with the perusal of the Apocalypse to make Mr Millerby think of building an observatory?

We know that thou art not content with simple motives; that it is thy peculiar care to penetrate to the complicated inner half-hidden devices and desires of the poor creature man. All his motives are mixed, poor thing! although he strives to keep the nobler ingredients near the surface, under the light of his own dim consciousness—the ingredients that seem noblest to him; but there may be others less showy under the surface, others that he in his blindness is prepared to disown, although they may be none the less worthy of honour if only he knew all.

That he should build an observatory seemed to Mr Millerby a direct special inspiration, a mandate *ab extra*, not the logical concatenation of scattered points of thought that had been in his mind before. The plan was so remote from the tracks of his ordinary business. Yet there had been a previous preparing of his mind for the resolution that suddenly started up full grown.

He had a son at Cambridge, and he had often made this son talk to him about the wonders of astronomy. Mr Millerby liked to learn and liked to show an interest in his son's studies; and though his mind often wandered during the

long answers that he received to his simple questions in physical science, he had picked up a good many elementary facts of the kind that did not require exact mathematical knowledge for their comprehension. He thus knew as much astronomy as might be gathered from courses of popular lectures on the subject. So that when he took up the Apocalypse after this discipline, he found himself master of many new lights—new, that is to say, to him—for the interpretation of the prophecies. Having reached the conclusion that the world was to be destroyed by a comet, Mr Millerby, as a simple enthusiast and a practical man of business, jumped quickly to a plan for saving mankind from the worst consequences of their physical extinction. For what were telescopes given to mankind if not to enable them to descry far-off cosmic dangers? By the aid of a powerful telescope, the destroying comet might be seen weeks before it crossed the path of the earth; its orbit might be calculated; the world might be forewarned.

Another motive, philoprogenitive rather than philanthropic, weighed with Mr Millerby. His son Stephen wished to go to the Bar. Mr Millerby, like a sensible man, wished him to come home, and succeed to the management of a very flourishing business. Why should he go in search of fame and fortune when he had a fortune ready-made to his hand? Stephen had just come out Third Wrangler, and was ambitious. Mr Millerby was not indifferent to the prospect of forensic honours for his son; but running for the Lord Chancellorship struck him as a doubtful speculation, and for nothing short of this would he have been content to forego the pleasure of having his son by him as assistant and suc-

cessor in his gigantic business, the creation of his own talent. He argued, therefore, that his son should come home, and he thought that a well-equipped observatory might be thrown in as a bribe to turn the scale. It was when this thought crossed his mind that a quick twinkle might have been observed in Mr Millerby's eyes—a shrewd light not unfamiliar to those who had had business transactions with the old gentleman.

How long Mr Millerby sat in his chair ruminating and sipping, now staring at the fire and now at the ceiling, while the storm roared without, it would probably have surprised him afterwards to be told. Time passes imperceptibly in such hours of intense absorption in new ideas. At last he got up, went to his table, read the awful chapter once more, and wrote an affectionate letter to his son. When Mr Millerby had the pen in his hand, the man of business was supreme, and he concentrated himself upon such arguments as might induce his son to settle at Norport. He said little about the proposed observatory, except as a means of scientific inquiry, such as might reconcile a man of scientific tastes to a life of business in a provincial town. He had heard his son speak of the possibility of discovering some mathematical law that would make meteorology as exact a science

as astronomy, and he did not fail to hold this out as an object worthy of his ambition. Nothing that money could supply would be wanting to make the observatory at Hardhill—this was the name of Mr Millerby's residence—as perfectly equipped as any observatory in the kingdom.

Mr Millerby had just completed what he considered a most conclusive argument when something happened that at first nearly frightened him out of his wits, and was afterwards accepted by him as a supernatural approval of his plans. A frightful gust made frameworks clatter and keyholes howl, and shook the house from top to bottom; and in the midst of all the hideous din, suddenly aggravated to such an extent as to rouse Mr Millerby from his absorbing thoughts, a bough torn from one of the trees on the lawn outside by the fury of the tempest, came crashing through the window. The sudden inrush of wind made the gas flare, and a cold gust tossed his hair about his pate. Mr Millerby, arrested in the act of wetting the gum of an envelope, started up in wild affright, but quickly regained his equanimity. This was an omen, a special sign. He forced the shutters to with a sense of awe, mixed himself a little more whisky-and-water, and went to bed.

CHAPTER II.

Long looked for comes at last.

Some fourteen or fifteen years after the memorable resolution recorded in our first chapter, the British Association for the Advancement of Science decided to hold its annual meeting at Norport, and Stephen Millerby was appointed one of the local secre-

taries for the arrangement of the proceedings.

Of course the observatory, which had been built and equipped regardless of expense, was to be one of the local shows. Stephen overhauled all his instruments, to have them in perfect readiness for the great occasion. In the course of

this occupation, as he was casually and carelessly sweeping the heavens, and trying lenses of different powers with a view to concocting amusing and impressive little experiments for semi-scientific visitors, his attention was suddenly arrested by a faint luminosity in an unexpected place.

He rubbed his glasses in some excitement, to make sure that there was no deception, and looked eagerly again. "By Jove!" he exclaimed to himself, "a COMET!"

He drew in his breath with an "is-s-s-p," put his hands in his pockets, and paced about with profound satisfaction. "Good luck!" thought he; "this will be something to show."

The more he thought over the comet, the more pleased he became. He stopped to take another look at it. "Yes; it is certainly a comet. Not much appearance of a tail as yet, but it will be all right by the time of the meeting."

Respect for truth compels me to relate that this ordinarily grave, solid-looking, large-headed, brown-bearded man of science was so far lost to all sense of dignity, that he began to jig and pirouette about like a schoolboy, only retaining so much command over himself as to move with caution, lest he should damage any of his instruments. He might even have been heard to mutter, "This way to the observatory! This way to the comet! Walk up, ladies and gentlemen! here you will see,"—and so on.

Next morning at breakfast Stephen told his father that he had made a capital discovery. "A new comet—a mere baby as yet in the telescope, but it will be full-grown and full-blown when the Association meets."

"How interesting!" said his mother. "I must come up and see it. Can you show it to me to-night?"

"Certainly," said Stephen. "I shall make another observation to-night, if the sky is clear. It is a pretty object now, like a very fine white veil."

"I hope the sky will be clear," said the lady. "How fortunate! You will make the meeting a great success, Stephen." And she looked at her son with fond pride. "I have not seen you in such spirits for years."

The mother was sensible of the sacrifice that Stephen had made in settling in such a dull place as Norport, and glad to see him cheered up by anything.

Mr Millerby, senior, sat meantime shaking his head with an air of great concern. "I have a presentiment," he said. Mr Millerby was not an ill-natured man—quite the contrary—but he still had hopes of living to see the destruction of the world by fire.

Stephen smiled to his mother. Neither of them had much faith in Mr Millerby's presentiment, though they kept their scepticism to themselves in his presence, and Stephen made a pretence to him of keeping a strict watch on the heavens. Being in exceptionally good spirits this morning, as his mother had remarked, he ventured to play a little with Mr Millerby's serious convictions. "It would be a very extraordinary coincidence if the end of the world should come in British Association week."

"That is what convinces me," returned his father. "They have been prying too much into the secrets of omniscience. Science is too much puffed up with its great discoveries. Man has been tempted to forget the frailty of his state. He will be cut off in the very blossom of his hopes, just when in his vanity he began to think that the secrets of the universe were within his grasp."

"But these discoveries have been for the benefit of mankind."

"To our limited intelligence it appears so," answered Mr Millerby, musing. "I will trouble you for a little of that omelet, my dear," he continued in the same tone.

It crossed Stephen's mind as he went vigorously on with his breakfast, that steam and the telegraph had proved very serviceable to the pecuniary interest of his father and himself; but he had too much grace to say so, though somehow things would turn their humorous side to him this morning.

Although Mr Millerby was possessed by a presentiment that the comet descried by Stephen was the long-expected enemy of the earth, the presentiment did not affect his appetite. But as he ate, he meditated, and presently he broke the silence again and asked: "Was not Northumbria the earliest seat of learning in England? I think I have heard you say so."

Stephen answered in a tone of some surprise, as if he did not see the drift of the question, "Its monasteries, I believe, were celebrated in the seventh and eighth centuries. But why do you ask?"

"You might call this district, in fact, the birthplace of English culture."

"With a little stretch there would be no impropriety in so doing. The proposition is more true about this district than about any other."

Mr Millerby sighed. "Ah, I thought so." Then he relapsed into silence.

"Thought what, my dear father?" asked Stephen, after a pause.

"I was thinking," answered Mr Millerby, "of the old saying—

'Who live so long the truth will see,
Where the beginning was, the end
shall be.'

The cradle of English culture is clearly destined to be its grave. We shall have here when the doom descends a representative gathering of the highest culture of our age, perhaps within sight of the very hill-tops that looked down on the industrious pioneers of English civilisation. How complete and perfect is the scheme of the world!

'Where the beginning was, the end shall be.'

It occurred to Stephen that his father was making England perhaps rather too much the centre of the world, and that the circle would have been more complete if this last meeting of men of science had been held in Central Asia or Egypt; but he only smiled over his own superior knowledge, and contented himself with saying that the first meeting of the British Association was held at York.

"Was it indeed?" exclaimed his father, with keen interest. "Cycle in epicycle, orb in orb. The more we know of the course of events, the more perfect appears its symmetry."

"But," resumed Stephen, with a smile, "we are going much too fast. This comet may not come anywhere near the earth, not within millions of miles. I have no clue yet to its direction."

Mr Millerby, however, was not to be shaken in his conviction. "I have an instinct," he said. "I feel that I am right."

There is no arguing against instinct. And, sure enough, when Stephen did obtain a clue—when he had taken three observations and calculated the orbit—Mr Millerby's instinct proved to be right, at least so far. The comet, if it continued its present course, and Stephen was exact in his observations and right in his calculations, would cross the path of the earth

on Friday the 7th of August, and as he timed it, would actually hit the earth if there was no deflection.

It was truly a most sensational and opportune comet for a British Association week.

CHAPTER III.

It was now drawing near the end of July, and Norport was preparing to receive the British Association. The visit was a great event for the rising town—an honour obtained not without much astute diplomacy, many deputations and solicitations. The mayor and his advisers had not, perhaps, very clear ideas as to the good that the town would get from the visit; but they were persuaded that it was a grand thing, and they thought themselves wonderfully clever fellows, gifted with rare powers of persuasive eloquence, to have bagged the men of science for Norport. Norport was that comparatively rare thing in an old country, a new town, a great centre of trade where forty years before there had been little more than a fishing village. Consequently there was much public spirit in Norport; and its town-hall, its warehouses, its docks, its churches, were a subject of great local pride. Norport was proud of itself, with all the pride of newly acquired wealth; it liked to be seen, and it regarded the acceptance of its invitation by an august and long-established body as a public recognition of its greatness. Norport was elated as a *parvenu* might be by admission to aristocratic society—not unconscious of its own worth, yet pleased at having sensibly advanced a step among the towns of the kingdom. Therefore the mayor and the aldermen were resolved that the reception should be worthy of the town, and there was quite a scramble among the leading citizens for the honour

of having as their private guests the magnates of the Association.

Fortunately for the harmony of the town, the hospitably inclined were for the most part indiscriminate in their appetite for notabilities. They took contentedly whom the local secretaries were pleased to allot. All were alike great and alike desirable. They had not the educated palate that distinguishes between the lion and the bore. And except in the case of a few aggravated specimens of the latter animal, they remained in the same blissful state of ignorance when the meeting was over, as all human things, even visits of a British Association, sooner or later are.

The Millerbys were privileged to have a lion, a great lion—no less a person than Professor Quickset, the astronomer. The observatory, of course, had led to this. Stephen had an epistolary acquaintance with the great man, and naturally had written to express the pleasure it would give him if Professor Quickset could stay at Hardhill over the meeting. The great man had at first courteously declined, on the ground that he was bringing his daughter with him; whereupon Mrs Millerby had renewed the invitation, and it had been agreed that they should come together.

But now, on the very morning when Stephen communicated to Mr and Mrs Millerby the results of his calculation of the comet's orbit, a difficulty had revealed itself.

That morning Stephen received a letter from Mr Quickset, saying

that he had agreed to give one of the popular evening lectures of the Association. Another learned man had undertaken the duty, but had been obliged at the last moment, owing to ill health, to declare his inability. Mr Quickset had been appealed to, and had good-naturedly consented to fill the gap.

So far the letter was a great relief and a positive pleasure to Stephen, as one who was, in a measure, responsible for the success of the meeting. For Quickset was celebrated as a lecturer, and a lecture by him was certain to be an attractive feature, almost enough of itself to give distinction to the proceedings.

But there was an addendum to the intimation in Mr Quickset's letter that was not so pleasing. "I regret to say," it ran, "that circumstances have occurred which might make it embarrassing for myself and my daughter to accept Mrs Millerby's kindly offered hospitality. Mr Hugh Millerby will explain, if you care to ask him. Pray be assured of my sincere regret, but the circumstances leave me no choice."

This Mr Hugh Millerby was Stephen's younger brother, then resident in London, and ostensibly reading for the Bar.

Stephen hesitated for a little how to break this news to his people; but he judged it best, after telling them that Mr Quickset had consented to lecture, to read the concluding passage of his letter.

This rather checked the pleased smiles with which the good people had received the first announcement. The fact that the great astronomer was to stay at their house had given them a certain sense of personal property in him, and it was a prospect pleasing to their simple souls that he should go forth from them to dazzle the

inhabitants of Norport. Mr Millerby was almost as much pleased as Mrs Millerby at the thought of sharing in the glory of their guest; for, strange to say, profound as was Mr Millerby's presentiment that the end of the world was at hand, he was very easily tempted to forget it when any practical calculations about the future were on the carpet. Thus both their faces fell at the news, and Mrs Millerby looked perplexed as well as disappointed.

"It is very awkward," Stephen said—"uncommonly awkward; for I posted my calculations about the comet to Hugh last night, and asked him to see Quickset about them."

"My dear boy," interposed Mr Millerby, his presentiment resuming its full force at the mention of the comet, "do you think it wise to make such an awful possibility public lightly, and without due consideration? We ought not to alarm the world unnecessarily. True, it is our duty to give men time for preparation; but there may, after all, be some mistake, and I tremble to think of the consequences of disturbing and unsettling men's minds unless there is absolute necessity."

"Not unless there is absolute necessity," chimed in Mrs Millerby mechanically, her mind busy all the time about the mysterious embarrassing circumstances mentioned in Mr Quickset's letter.

"Oh, as to that," said Stephen, sharply, "I can easily write to Hugh and tell him to say nothing about the comet as yet. But I wish he could have seen Quickset. It is very awkward. I must write to Quickset myself, I suppose. But the worst of it is, I have sent all my calculations to Hugh. I don't believe I have kept even a note of the positions."

"Couldn't Hugh send them to

Professor Quickset?" suggested his practical father.

"There would be no indelicacy in that, certainly," assented Stephen. "Only Hugh is so very punctilious, that he might think even that much an indication of a wish to reopen negotiations."

"What on earth has the poor boy done?" cried the puzzled mother. "I am sure Hugh would never do anything dishonourable. What can he have done to prevent Mr Quickset from coming here, or him from going to see Mr Quickset?"

The two men only smiled, which increased the lady's perplexity, and gave it a touch of exasperation.

If Mrs Millerby had not somehow been in the habit of conceiving men of science and their families as strange far-off beings of a peculiar constitution, inhabiting a dry, clear, intellectual region, inaccessible to the ordinary feelings of mankind, her woman's instinct would have flown straight to the truth without a perceptible interval for reflection. Apart, too, from this rooted conception of the man of science and everything connected with him as dry mechanism—a very prevalent conception in the provincial mind—it is possible that mothers are less quick-witted about their own sons than about the sons of other daughters of Eve. Even sisters sometimes find it difficult to realise the existence of certain feelings in their brothers.

"Well, you may understand it,

but I am sure I don't," said Mrs Millerby, in an offended tone. "Let me see the letter."

Stephen handed her the letter with a smile, and the remark, "I thought women were quicker in these matters than men."

"What matters?" asked the bewildered lady.

"Read it again," said Stephen.

"Circumstances have occurred which make it impossible for myself and my daughter——"

"Well?" interrupted Stephen, watching her face with an amused look, and grasping the edge of the table with his hands wide apart, as if ready to rise when she had solved the problem for herself.

"Well?" echoed Mr Millerby, with his head on one side, and a very arch look.

"Ah, I see," said she at last, thoughtfully, handing the letter back; "Hugh has proposed and been rejected. Well, he might have told me of his intentions. But young men don't take their parents into their confidence as much as they used to do in the old times. I am sure Mr Quickset needn't have been afraid of Hugh's taking any advantage."

"The spirit of science is cautious," said Stephen, rising.

"Don't go yet," said Mrs Millerby, detaining Stephen after his father left the room. "Wait a moment. I have a letter about Hugh's friends. You put it out of my head with your comet."

CHAPTER IV.

"If the comet does no more serious damage than that," said Stephen, "it will not justify my father's presentiment. Where is the letter?"

"There seems to be a fatality about our guests for this Associa-

tion," Mrs Millerby ruefully said, as she took the letter from its envelope.

"What has happened next?" muttered Stephen. "Anybody else not coming?"

"Worse than that!" exclaimed she.

"Worse than *that*!" echoed Stephen, in surprise.

"Yes. Read this."

Stephen read, with heightening colour, as follows: "Is Mrs Millerby aware of the character of certain persons whom she has invited to her house? Mrs Brockley, with the air of a woman who has seen more of life than a lady ought to have seen. Mrs Darby Rorke, or, as she calls herself when she writes novels, Jane Marjoram, living apart from her husband, and showing in her stories the same shady knowledge as Mrs Brockley, who passes as her mother. Is Mrs Millerby aware that her son, Mr Hugh Millerby, is compromising himself by his attentions to Mrs Darby Rorke? If Mrs Millerby had been aware of this, would she have invited these *ladies* to her house?"

There was no signature to this friendly warning. "What malignant beast can have written this?" Stephen asked, flushed to the roots of his hair and angry.

"I am sure I don't know," said Mrs Millerby. "I never saw the handwriting before. It is most distressing. I don't know what to think. What am I to do?"

"We can't pay any attention to an anonymous letter," said Stephen, loudly. "Throw it in the fire—that's the only thing to be done. Pity the writer can't be thrown after it."

"Yes; but what if it is true? Hugh should be more careful. He is so very impetuous."

Stephen smiled in spite of himself. "Compromising himself by dangling after Mrs Rorke, and at the same time proposing to Miss Quickset. Pretty well for a youngster of four-and-twenty, not yet called."

"How can he ask me to ask such people?" said the dismayed lady.

"All in the way of his great design, I suppose. You must remember that he is a student of life in all its varieties."

"There are some varieties that he had better leave alone. How am I to get out of it? I can't very well write now and say my house is full."

"Plead the sudden death of a friend of the family," suggested Stephen, rather enjoying his mother's embarrassment.

"Stephen," she replied, firmly, "I can never condescend to a lie. What would your father say?"

"And the end of all things so near, too," he continued.

"I would never do it. I would rather receive them than put them off with a falsehood."

"Tuts, mother," he said, "it was only my fun. You don't mean seriously to say that you take the word of an anonymous mischief-maker for Gospel truth."

"How am I to know that it is not true? And how am I to receive such people?"

"Nobody here will know them. And if they are notorious to London folks, we shall only be supposed to be marching with the times. It will raise our provincial town in their estimation."

"Stephen, Stephen, how can you say such things?" murmured Mrs Millerby, much scandalised.

"But, seriously, you attach far too much weight to this anonymous slander. You shouldn't take the slightest notice of it. A famous novelist like Jane Marjoram is sure to have many spiteful enemies."

"I know what I will do," cried Mrs Millerby, after a pause. "I will send the letter to Hugh. Why didn't I think of it before? He is sure to know the handwriting."

"The handwriting in such cases

is always disguised," commented Stephen.

"But it would give him an opportunity of defending them," she persisted.

"It is not really necessary. The fact is," he continued, after a little hesitation, flushing slightly, and carefully steadying his voice, "I know something about Mrs Brockley and Mrs Darby Rorke; and Mr Darby Rorke too," he added.

"You, Stephen!" said his mother, with surprise. "Why, you never told me of this."

"Did I never mention it?" asked he, with an assumption of innocence. "That's odd. I knew them very well at one time."

"When was that? where? Are they all right, then? I thought Hugh would not have asked me to invite strangers that are what this letter says. But why did you never mention before that you knew them? How did you come to know them? You met them in London, I suppose. But perhaps you don't, after all, know anything more about them than Hugh!" Here Mrs Millerby paused, breathless, for a reply.

"Gently, gently; one question at a time. Where am I to begin? which am I to answer first?" It was fortunate for Stephen that his mother's volubility gave him time to collect his ideas.

"Well, then, are they respectable?"

"To the best of my knowledge and belief, perfectly so. In fact, Mrs Brockley used to profess to be an old school friend, and a sort of relation of yours."

"An old friend of mine! I am certain I never knew anybody of that name."

"But that may not have been her name when she was a girl."

"But why did you never tell me before?"

"There was nothing to suggest it, I suppose. I thought less of the relationship because Cecilia—Mrs Rorke, that is—used to say that her mother never met anybody without discovering kinship in some degree."

"Cecilia! Then you know Mrs Rorke's Christian name?"

"Oh yes," said Stephen, stolidly.

Mrs Millerby started, and exclaimed in a dreamy tone, "Then that explains."

"Explains what?" asked Stephen sharply, looking startled for a moment. "But pray, conclude your catechism, as I must be off into town."

"Jane Marjoram's last novel," replied his mother. "Don't you remember my saying that the old clergyman must have been taken from my father—just his temper, and his ways, and his favourite phrases, and the colour of his cheeks, and his white hair brought round from behind his ears? And the scenery, too, was just like Alderbeck, and the Hall about a mile from the Rectory. Ah, I have it now. It must be Cissy Dickson. But she married Squire Neaton's second son, who was in the army, and went to India, where he died, and I have never heard of her for years."

"Then Mr Brockley may have been her second husband. In fact, I know that Mrs Rorke was the daughter of a previous husband."

"But where did you meet them, Stephen? How strange that she should have sent no message to me, if she was Cissy Dickson, though perhaps——" Here Mrs Millerby was stopped by some reminiscence, which apparently she did not wish to communicate. "Where did you meet them?" she repeated.

"It was a long time ago," said

Stephen, in an indifferent tone, "when I was at Cambridge."

"Indeed! and did you know them well?"

"I used to be pretty often at their house."

"And what were they doing at Cambridge?"

"I am sure I don't know," Stephen answered. Irreverent undergraduates in those days said that Mrs Brockley had fixed her residence in Cambridge with designs upon the dons, and Stephen smiled at the recollection. But he only said: "Mrs Brockley liked

the society of learned men, I suppose. She professed to be rather a scholar herself, I remember, and quoted Latin. But I must be off to town."

"Stay a moment. What about Mr Rorke? Was he a don?"

"No. He was a scamp."

"A what?"

"He was a gentleman by birth, I believe. But I will tell you more another time."

"Then the invitation may stand?"

"I should think so," said Stephen, and made good his retreat.

CHAPTER V.

When Hugh Millerby received his brother Stephen's letter about the comet, he was not in high spirits, but, on the contrary, utterly woe-begone, plunged in the most dismal of doleful dumps, humiliated to the lowest possible point of self-contempt, ready to curse his fate and die.

In vain he had plied himself with the approved topics of consolation. None of the plasters would stick. They only envenomed the wound. He was disposed to say in his haste that all moralists are quacks.

In vain he tried to persuade himself of the absurdity of hankering after what he could not get. This argument produced in his mind for a little an artificial stoic calm; but presently there was a turn in his thoughts, and the logical conclusion stared him in the face, that he must be a weak fool to be so horribly disturbed by a trivial incident. The demonstration had the force of necessary truth. The conclusion was not comforting.

It would be all the same a hundred years hence. Perhaps;

but it was not the same, it was painfully different, now.

Was it not the great aim of his life to acquire a knowledge of the human heart? Certainly. He would plant his foot firmly on that. Such knowledge comes from suffering. He had gained, then, in experience. True, but where was the knowledge? He was conscious only of the suffering. A very profitless item of knowledge this.

It is strange that after all the laughter that the world has spent on lovers' agonies, young men seem never the wiser when their turn comes. Every schoolboy knows that they are transitory, yet when the schoolboy is a little older, and is caught in the snare, they are none the less sharp in passing.

Hugh Millerby's position was rendered additionally galling by the fact that it was a violation of his principles to fall in love at all. We have already hinted that he had a great purpose in life—a mighty work to accomplish. The precise nature of this great design was a mystery, a secret not revealed to his most intimate friends, although several of them knew that

he had a great design. Perhaps it was not distinctly formulated even to his own mind; but if this was so, it was not the less great on that account. Definition, formula, as we all know, is abhorrent to great conceptions. This much Hugh Millerby made no secret of, that a wide study of all varieties of life was an essential preliminary of his achievement. In his Oxford days he had even formed the heroic intention of going through the routine of various professions, and he was already more than half through his course of preparation for the Bar, besides having acquired a fair familiarity with the stage, both before and behind the scenes. His mother wished him to take orders and become a bishop; he had thoughts of trying a curacy in the East End.

Marriage, of course, for a young man thus resolved to sacrifice himself and lead a life of nomadic observation, would have been fatal. Now why was it that in spite of his clear deliberate recognition of this cardinal fact, the predestined observer of his species was always falling in love? The answer to this I must leave to the psychologists. I can only chronicle the strange paradoxical fact that an impartial observer of him, Hugh Millerby, the observer by profession, would have judged him to be a singularly susceptible youth, born to be made a fool of by woman.

Grace Quickset had given him a very gentle refusal, for she was a gentle-hearted as well as a very beautiful girl, with soft dark eyes and a sweet voice, and all the charm of the spring-time in her opening womanhood. She had behaved as girls generally do in such circumstances, when they rather like the man, and are sorry to wound his feelings, and perhaps

feel a certain touch of remorse at the sight of a woful face. Good girls are creatures of tender conscience, and apt to take blame to themselves when a man whom they have smiled upon because they liked him, wishes to appropriate them all to himself, and considers himself injured and blighted when they refuse.

As a reasonable man, vowed to celibacy for a great purpose, Hugh should have been pleased to get off so cheaply. But he was bitterly disappointed. Such is the perversity of human nature. Nay, more, he was determined to try again.

He had been too precipitate.

"It is very hard," she had said, tearfully, "to lose one's friends in this way, just when one is beginning to know them and to like them. Why did you speak to me? I am very sorry you spoke to me. It was much better as it was."

"Then let it be as if I had not spoken," the ingenuous lover had suggested.

"No, that can't be. It can never be the same again after this."

He had pressed her to say why, foolish man! but could get no satisfactory answer.

Then it had occurred to him that possibly her father had objections to his suit.

He went to the father with a most virtuous and honourable resolution. If the father objected, he would take his dismissal as final, and do his best to forget. If not, well—without persecuting the girl, he would continue to hope and to strive for a more favourable answer.

But if there was anything doubtful and difficult to interpret in the daughter's answer, there was nothing of this kind in the father's. Mr Quickset was courteous and calm, but perfectly explicit, as be-

came a man of science. He did object.

"To my character or my position?" the young man asked, in a somewhat husky and unsteady voice.

"I had rather not enter into particulars," Mr Quickset replied. "But what do you mean to do?"

"Fortunately I am not under the necessity of doing anything. Through no merit of mine, I am in a position to marry without entering any profession."

"That is 'fortunately' or 'unfortunately,' as the case may be," was Mr Quickset's answer. "But I don't mean that. What is your purpose in life? What use do you intend to make of your independence? A father, I think, has some right to know something on that point before intrusting his only daughter to a comparative stranger."

Unluckily this was a point on which Hugh had considerable difficulty in formulating clear ideas even to himself. He could only, somewhat shamefacedly, and with an appalling consciousness of the weakness of his position, stammer forth something about an intention to write novels when he had acquired sufficient knowledge of human nature. The great conception looked miserably poor, almost ridiculously so, even in his own eyes, when thus expressed in its lowest terms.

Mr Quickset did not smile. He only asked, in such tones as he might have used in a *viva voce* examination on a scientific subject—"On what grounds do you ask me to believe that you are capable of writing novels?"

Thus cornered, Hugh could only laugh in a deprecating way. "I suppose I must ask you to take that on trust."

"I think you must see for yourself," returned Mr Quickset, "that this is asking a good deal." He spoke as if this admission terminated the discussion. Hugh felt that it did, and retired with as much grace as he could.

He was turning over in his mind these disagreeable incidents, which had occurred only the day before, when Stephen's letter about the comet reached him. Quickset had written at once, and the letters had crossed one another.

Children sometimes ask favours of their parents, saying to themselves all the time that they will not be in the least disappointed if the parents say no. But somehow when the refusal comes, they find themselves not quite so indifferent as they had supposed.

Something like this happened to Hugh Millerby. He had said to himself that if Mr Quickset objected, he would take his rejection as final. But somehow when he knew Mr Quickset's mind, he was more disposed to fight against it than before.

His meditations were not pleasant when he received the letter from his brother asking him to see the professor about the comet. He was smarting from the sense of defeat. His utter rout by the man of science was too mortifying to be quickly forgotten.

"So the end of the world is at hand," he said to himself with grim humour. "Well, no matter how soon it comes."

CHAPTER VI.

When the wheels of life are clogged and stiffened by the humours of despondency, the only cure is to put the system in brisk motion. Hugh Millerby roused himself for a spell of work. The keen thrusts of Quickset's scepticism had not pricked the bladder of his ambition; it had put spurs in the side of his intent.

The work into which he threw himself was peculiar. To the ordinary eye he might have appeared to be only amusing himself in a very aimless and unprofitable way. The ordinary mind would have augured ill for the future of a young man who spent the most precious hours of the day in reading the newspapers, more especially if it had been observed that the reader confined himself to law reports and police reports and other sensational ephemera. This was all that Hugh Millerby appeared to be doing. Could Quickset only have seen him! But appearances are often deceptive, when we have not the right clue to their interpretation.

He had a defence for this apparent squandering of his time. It was not what it seemed. Whether the defence was sound or not is not for me to say, but it was at least plausible. He did not read out of mere vulgar curiosity, and for the mere sake of passing excitement. No: he read to acquire a knowledge of human nature, and we know that he had an object in this acquisition. The persistency, then, with which he read the newspapers, was not a sign of vacuous purposelessness, but a measure of the extent to which he was absorbed in the pursuit of his great design.

"My dear sir," he would have said, if he had been interviewed

on the subject, "it is the greatest possible mistake to depend too much on yourself. For any great work you must enlist the service of others. You must make use of the eyes and ears of others. You cannot do everything yourself. Your work must inevitably be thin and bodiless if you attempt it. Now, if human nature is your subject, where are you to go but to the abstract and brief chronicles of the time? What other repertory is there? You get forty times as much in one paper as you could collect in a month if you went into the highways and byways for yourself. You get the collected results of hundreds of systematic, alert, and practised inquirers. Very little of the vast subject of human nature can come within the purview of one unaided individual. Of course you must learn something—all that you can—at first hand for yourself, just to acquire the necessary tact in judging of evidence. But beyond that—the more you trust your unconscious fellow-workers the better."

This was Hugh Millerby's triumphant defence of his apparent trifling. And he had a great commonplace-book, full of cuttings and notes. Full? Well, not exactly full, perhaps. And as he turned over the leaves this morning before beginning work, he observed with some remorse that the entries were irregular, not quite continuous, in point of date. There were gaps here and there. But it would be full in time.

He made a good many entries this morning, and felt much better when he shut the book and sallied forth to lunch at his club—the Junior Pantheon.

It was singularly cold unsettled

weather for the time of year; and there was a freshness and a nip in the air, very inspiriting after the hot suns of July to a man in flaccid condition. Hugh Millerby's spirits rose as he walked briskly along, with the wind at his back. As he held back his head, the better to keep his hat on, the clouds caught his eye. "Bad weather for the comet!" thought he. "My father will think this a providential interposition to cover the advance of the thing. No doubt he thinks the veil was lifted just long enough to let Stephen have a good look, and then dropped again."

Hugh lunched early,—of course on principle—he did everything on principle, or at least found a principle for everything that suited his inclination,—and there was nobody in the dining-room of the club when he arrived, except a foreign Count, a temporary member, whom Adam Napier had introduced. Who Adam Napier was we shall see presently.

Count Ramassy—this was his name—was seated at one of the small tables by a window, a distinguished-looking man, with firm aquiline features, and a grave mien—noticeably grave for so young a man—a man who would have been judged by his appearance to be not more than two or three and twenty. He nodded gravely to Millerby, who joined him at his little table.

Poor Millerby! He was in a run of bad luck. He had almost succeeded in banishing all thoughts of the harrowing Quickset from his mind. He might reasonably have expected a conversation with a stranger from a distant land to complete the beneficial change. A nobleman all the way from Austria might have been counted on as a diversion. But ill-luck would not have it so. The dreaded name,

charged with painful memories, was introduced before his second glass of claret.

A word or two on casual subjects, and for want of a better topic Millerby broached the comet. You will remember that he had not yet received any injunction to keep it dark.

"Are you interested in comets, at all?" he began. "A brother of mine, who is a bit of an astronomer, has just discovered rather a rarity in that way, which ought to make some sensation, if he is right in his calculation of its orbit."

"Indeed!" said Ramassy.

"It seems that it will just about meet the earth. In fact he calculates that there must be a collision."

"Rather a startling prospect."

"Oh, I don't suppose there is any harm in comets."

"A disputed point, however."

"Then you know something of astronomy."

"Not a great deal," Ramassy answered. "Quite as an amateur. I have a small observatory at my own place. I take a *dilettante* interest in most branches of science."

"So I might have supposed, from your acquaintance with Adam Napier."

"Ah, that was a curious accident," said Ramassy, with a faint smile. "You have heard how I met him?"

"No," said Hugh, "I have not."

"It was such a curious coincidence that I fancied he might have mentioned it to you. I had the misfortune on my way here, either at Calais or before reaching it, to lose part of my baggage, and among other things some letters of introduction."

"But you had been in England before?" said Hugh, in answer to

the narrator's pause for some expression of sympathy.

"No; never in my life."

"Then I must compliment you on your knowledge of the language. You might have been born here, you speak it so perfectly."

"I have not much credit by that. I had an English nurse and an English tutor. But it was an awkward predicament, was it not? seeing that I had but a limited time, and wished to make as many acquaintances as possible."

"It must have thrown you out, of course, till you recovered your baggage, or got fresh letters."

"Yes; and one does not like troubling one's friends over again for that sort of thing. But I was very fortunate. I had a letter to Mr Adam Napier, among others. He has already a reputation, as you know, on the Continent; and he happened to cross in the same boat with myself from Calais."

"And you introduced yourself without any letter?"

"Yes. But how did I know him? I will tell you. I was struck with the appearance of a young man lying on one of the seats, apparently not much enjoying the passage, with his head resting on a little black travelling-bag, and while I was looking at him, my eye accidentally caught his name on the label. So I introduced myself and explained matters to him, and we became very good friends at once. Curious coincidence, was it not? He was perhaps the man in all England that I most wished to meet. If I were superstitious, I might take it as an omen."

"Now you interest me," said Hugh, with a smile; "an omen of what?"

"Of success in my mission," answered Ramassy, evasively.

"Pardon me for asking so blunt a question," said Hugh; "but it is

not often that one meets a scientific man who thinks of omens. I have been brought up in an atmosphere of omens myself."

"I may tell you about it another time; but it is rather a serious matter—for club conversation. He is an excellent fellow, Napier, is he not?"

"A first-rate fellow," said Milnerby, warmly.

"He is engaged to the young Miss Quickset, I hear. A charming girl."

"I had not heard that," answered Hugh, with a change of tone which did not escape the attention of his companion.

"But what about your comet?" asked Ramassy, abruptly changing the conversation after a pause, in which Hugh occupied himself busily with his luncheon. "Could your brother let me have the position of it to send to my man at home?"

"Certainly," said Hugh, feeling in his pocket. "He has just sent his calculations to me to show to Quickset. I thought I had put them in my pocket, but I must have left them at my rooms."

"Any time will do. Not good weather for observations, is it?"

"No," said Hugh. "By the by, are you likely to see Quickset soon? I might send you the papers and let you pass them on to him."

"He dines with me to-night at the Pantheon."

"The very thing. How can I let you have the papers? I am going to Raspian's this afternoon,—you know Raspian, the editor of the 'Serapeum'?—but I have a call to make before, and I am afraid can hardly be at my rooms till after. Suppose I send them down to the Pantheon before your dinner-hour."

It turned out that the Count was going to Raspian's also, and it

was arranged that he should call for the papers on his way back.

"Talking of Quickset," said Ramassy presently, after this was agreed upon; "you know Quickset, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Hugh.

"He is not a rich man, I believe?"

"Not over-rich, I daresay."

"Scientific men are not over-remunerated in this country. So he is not over-rich?"

There was something in the Count's manner of putting these questions that seemed to indicate more than gossip curiosity. Probably also there was something in Hugh's face of a desire to know what this manner meant, for after a little hesitation the Count said—

"You wonder why I question you about this? Well, I wish to ask your advice about a matter in which I don't very well know how to proceed. You will give me your advice frankly, will you not?"

Hugh promised to do so.

"I have a place on the Lake of Como that I make very little use of, and for various reasons" (here a shade of sadness crossed the

speaker's face) "am not likely even to visit for a year or two. Now, do you think that Quickset would be offended if I were to offer him the use of it for as many months as he liked?"

"I don't see why he should be," answered Hugh, promptly.

"But Englishmen are so sensitive about anything like patronage," persisted the Count. "It would be no sacrifice for me, of course; in fact it would be rather a favour to me, for the house is practically shut up, and would be much the better for somebody living in it. It would be decidedly a favour to me if Quickset would go there."

"Why don't you let it?" asked Hugh.

The Count shook his head sadly. "I cannot do that. But," he resumed, after a pause, "you don't think he would be offended?"

"I can't answer for him. I can only say that I don't see why he should be."

"He would not take it as an insulting—a—a—condescension?"

"Why should he?"

"You relieve my mind," said Count Ramassy.

CHAPTER VII.

"Good fellow that," mused Hugh Millerby, as, still conscious of having to keep down a certain uneasy pain at his heart, he threw himself into a hansom, and made for the residence of Mrs Darby Rorke. It was one of those small houses with stuccoed Palladian fronts which lie in labyrinthine streetfuls to the south of Kensington Gardens, behind the line of statelier mansions.

Hugh was received by the lady's mother, with whom he was an especial favourite.

"So you have come for Cecilia, have you?" said she; "to take her to Mr Rospian's grand parade."

"For *yourself* and Mrs Rorke, if you please, Mrs Brockley," emended Hugh politely.

"No, not for me, if you please. It's not for the likes of me. I'm not good enough for such very select assemblies. You see what it is to be the mother of a celebrity, Mr Millerby. They don't want me. It's my gifted daughter. I have seen a good many university men in my time, and some of

them not very distinguished for politeness, but I must say I don't think much of your new school, though they do give themselves society airs. I am afraid Mr Raspian did not take a first in the school of politeness. That branch of education is sadly neglected in our universities."

Hugh was puzzled at this outburst, but gravely acquiesced. "I am afraid it is. They might endow research in the subject."

"And put Mr Raspian on to it. I am sure he has a great deal to learn."

"A lady professor might be useful to give the study a start," suggested Hugh.

"Oh no; women have quite enough to do with private pupils. I'm not in favour of any of your Radical fads. It's custom, I suppose. My father was a Conservative, my first husband was a Conservative, my second husband was a Conservative, and—well, you see I have lived in what you would call a stagnant atmosphere. No other climate would suit me now. I am too old to change now."

"Don't say that, Mrs Brockley. Who knows? If an earnest and impassioned Liberal should succeed in persuading you——"

"No, no, Mr Millerby," returned the lady, with a coquettish toss of the head. "Oil and vinegar don't mix."

"I will not presume to ask which is the oil and which is the vinegar. Oil is a soft and gentle liquid, and would rightly typify——"

"You had better not pursue the subject," said Mrs Brockley, sharply, "or you may get mixed, though the oil and vinegar can't."

"But what is the matter with poor Raspian?"

"Nothing very much, I daresay. The little man is good enough in his way. I have always been accus-

tomed to intellectual society too. My father was a great reader. I was born, I may say, in a library. But then an intellectual man should be a gentleman. I am old-fashioned enough to like the politeness of the old school. A man can't be very agreeable company unless he is a gentleman—can he, Mr Millerby? And that is apparently what Mr Raspian is not?"

"You must have seen the wrong side of him, somehow," pleaded Hugh. "I assure you he is a very pleasant fellow."

"*Via media tutissimus*," returned Mrs Brockley. "That's your motto, I see. I know you. You understand Mr Raspian as well as I do, though you don't say so. Well, I will give you an example of him, and see how you can get out of that. We had Mr Raspian here to dinner one evening, and he took me in, and from the soup to the dessert not one word of his conversation did he direct to me. He would persist in talking at Cecilia the whole time. It was no great loss, it is true; for he had nothing to converse about but books and bookbindings and pictures, and this hotel in Switzerland, and the other picture-gallery in Italy. You know the kind of thing," she continued volubly, mimicking the Oxford drawl,—"What a lovely bit of road that is between San Bremo and San Fremo—particularly from the bridge at the bottom of the hill about half-way, the view along the stream is really enchanting!" or, 'Ah, of course you did not miss the gallery at Cosavientio. That is a sweet Correggio in the corner, but it ought to be hung in a better light. It is quite thrown away there.' And so on. Would you believe it? the man actually turned his back on me, and when I tried to lead the conversation to Hindoo

architecture and the scenery on the Ganges, he was positively rude: he only stared for a moment, and then went on about having to get out and walk up a hill somewhere or other 'amidst a tropical flush of verdure and colour.' A tropical flush of bad manners, thought I."

"Certainly," answered the apologist, overwhelmed by this onslaught on his friend, "I am surprised to hear that Rospian behaved so badly. No doubt the talk of the university dons does sometimes run a little too much on reminiscences of Continental travel. You should have put him down."

"Ah, well, I was obliged to be civil to the man, don't you know, for Cecilia's sake, and pretend to be interested. He might have got some of his understrappers to 'slate' her next book. I know the lingo, you see. One must make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. So I had to content myself with talking him over after he left."

"And he missed the opportunity of a valuable lesson, which might have been as useful to him as any two of his long vacation rambles."

"What is it that the Latin poet says about travellers?" asked Mrs Brockley, putting forefinger to brow meditatively. "What is it? *Cælum non animatum*. But my Latin is getting rusty."

"Do you mean to say that you know Latin?" said Millerby, with a respectful air, eager to pacify. "Not many ladies possess that accomplishment."

"I dip into Horace sometimes," answered she, lightly. "My father taught me Greek as well as Latin, and made me read Horace to him regularly. I don't remember much of my Greek now." (She might

have added that her knowledge originally was limited to the alphabet.) "What is the use of it to me?" she asked, holding out her hands with the palms upwards. "I am the mother of a celebrity, and of course the mothers of celebrities are illiterate and unpresentable, and only tolerated for the sake of their daughters. 'Let me introduce you to Mrs Darby Rorke,'" she continued, mimicking a very ceremonious introduction. "'I have long wished for the honour.' I have seen a dozen celebrities introduced to my celebrated daughter in one evening, and me—only her mother—a thing of no consequence—left to the tender mercies of some shy uncomfortable nincompoop of a youth who had been tethered to me, and was too timid to leave, and shifted from one leg to the other, and desperately pumped up conversation about my daughter's novels, as if I had never seen anything, and knew nothing, and had lived all my life as her mother. Oh, I assure you, it's not a very enviable position being the mother of a celebrity. People of genius shouldn't have mothers. Let me advise you, Mr Millerby, never have a mother. They are dreadful encumbrances."

"Well, well," sighed the young man thus admonished, in a tone of plaintive sorrow. "Shy uncomfortable nincompoop! Little did I think when I prided myself on having monopolised the most brilliant talker in the company——"

"Nonsense, Mr Millerby," interrupted she. "There was a time, perhaps. But one can't talk without sympathy; and we don't get much of that when we grow old and withered. But," she continued, not giving him time to protest, "you know I didn't mean

you. You are always very polite to me—just like your brother.”

“My brother!” exclaimed Hugh, in unfeigned astonishment.

Now the truth was, that although Mrs Brockley had known Stephen Millerby at Cambridge, Mrs Rorke for some reason had persuaded her not to mention the fact to Hugh. But in the excitement of talking she could not always keep her reservations in mind, and she let out this reference to Hugh's brother before she remembered the compact of silence. However, she recovered herself with great promptitude.

“Did I say your brother? Dear me! I must be losing my wits. It was a mere *penna lingue*. I meant your mother. You see I have been accustomed to so much attention,” she continued, resuming her grievance.

“Naturally,” interjected Hugh, as the celebrated daughter entered, putting on her gloves, and welcomed him with a cordial smile.

“Go and get ready now,” she said to her mother, “and don't keep us waiting longer than you can help.”

But “*Festina lente*,” was the

reply of the learned and ruffled lady. “I am not going with you. I have had enough of Mr Raspian already. You don't catch me in any of his parliaments of prigs. It may be very enjoyable for you, but I am tired of trotting about as a disagreeably necessary appendage to a gifted daughter.”

“Nonsense, mother; go and put your things on.”

“Yes, dearie, I will go and put my things on. But I will not go with you to be gorgonised with a stony British stare by Messrs Scissors and Paste. The mother of a genius may not be ornamental, but she can be useful, and I will do some shopping. Mr Millerby, let me repeat my advice to you. If you are a man of genius, whatever you do, don't have a mother. Good afternoon,” and Mrs Brockley left the room.

“Can't we persuade her to change her mind?” asked Hugh. Mrs Rorke shook her head. So they had to go without the “disagreeably necessary appendage.”

One good service the volatile lady had rendered to Mr Hugh Millerby. He was no longer dejected.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES?

SINCE that in Literature, Science, Philosophy, History, Politics, there is so constant a dragging up of "questions" from the darkest nooks and the profoundest deeps, it is a strange thing that nobody should have been inspired to ask, What has become of the middle classes? At a time not very far distant—no bad old time, but one that seems to have been as enlightened and as reasonable as any that has since ensued—the middle classes were understood to be the soundest, the purest, the strongest, the wisest in all the land; and as such they received homage from press and platform continually. For every civic virtue, for every domestic excellence, they were celebrated in strains of fervid panegyric that went on for nearly twenty years. It was said, it was believed, and there was reason to believe, that with such a middle class as commerce had grown and education had nourished in Great Britain since the beginning of the century, there could be no fear for the stability and peace of the empire. Bred in homes that were to other homes what model farms are to other farms; more racy of the soil than the weak and spindle-grown aristocracy, and yet unstained by the muck of it; fresh, young, vigorous, inventive, ready, the future was for them; and happy was the country which, whoever seemed to control its affairs, must remain henceforth under the direction of the abounding indomitable common-sense of such a middle class. Every man of fifty who takes an interest in public business must recollect the strain, and he will probably remember, also, how proud and com-

fortable it made him feel. And as a matter of fact, the middle classes did exercise for a considerable period the dominant authority in all affairs of Government. Their name was heard, their influence was felt, everywhere; and seeing how rapidly they increased in number and in wealth, it did seem probable enough that they would be the commanding power in Great Britain for many generations, and a wise and strong power too.

Now what has become of them? The times of which we are speaking are not very remote. There are men still alive who can look back to "the Whig oligarchies," &c., before the reign of the middle classes began, and already it seems to be quite over! Let the gentle reader ask himself when he heard of the middle classes last. Five-and-twenty years ago you could not open a newspaper without alighting upon some reference to them and their sentiments,—what they would certainly demand, what they would indignantly resist, how fatal their hostility would be in such and such a case—and so forth. But now? It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the name of the dodo appears as often in the public prints as any mention of the middle classes. We whose business it is to study the political press do not remember any recent reference to them at all in the discussion of affairs, or as contributing to the voice of public opinion. Of classes we hear very much, no doubt; but of the great middle classes, as they used to be called, nothing. To judge from all that is written in the newspapers and spouted from platforms, those classes are effaced, and only two remain for the politi-

cian to deal with—landlords, and the most indigent and ignorant poor.

Now surely there is something very remarkable about this; and it will not appear less strange when we consider who the middle classes are, and whence they spring, and what their numbers and their condition at this day. Take all this into account, and, while the claims that were made for them a few years ago will seem well justified, we shall wonder yet more at their disappearance as an active political power.

In defining the middle classes, we should exclude the whole race of ancient landed gentry: they belong rather to the aristocratic sections of society. Leave them out, and the middle classes will be composed of the vast mass of men who in this nation of shopkeepers have become more or less rich by generations of trade. The whole mercantile and commercial fraternity are included, from the millionaire banker and mine-owner to the well-to-do retailer of all the numerous High Streets in the three kingdoms. All the professional classes are included—they in their tens of thousands; and the host of independent persons who draw income from the savings of commercial forefathers; and the greater host of men, for the most part decently nurtured and educated, who are employed as managers and clerks in the conduct of the enormous trade of the country. Put all these and the likes of them together, and it will be seen that the middle classes form a very large part of the whole community; and that their share of the nation's business, its thought, its enterprise, its experiment, its invention—of all that nourishes while it employs energy and activity of mind—is far greater than that of any other

section of society. Such a class might well be expected to make its influence predominant in the conduct of public affairs: an influence generous and wise. For, numerous as they are, what do the middle classes represent? They represent, for the most part, the pick of the people.

From all that is said about the poor, it would be reasonable to infer that the working classes have had no share in the vast commercial prosperity of the last half-century. But that would be very erroneous indeed. To say nothing about wages and the standard of living, the apparently unsuspected truth is, that thousands and thousands of working-class families have been borne into comfort, and even into affluence, on the flood of prosperity of which the fount was Watt's teakettle. Contrary to the common assumption, the middle class of a hundred years ago did not breed all the families of the middle classes of to-day. A certain number of them, no doubt, are sprung from the order of gentlefolk, continuing a stock centuries old; others—a much larger contingent—do not know who their people were, or where they were, three generations ago. But by far the larger number are the sons and grandsons of men who were born in the lower ranks of society, or themselves began life deep down in the social scale. In other words, the middle classes of the present time have been and are recruited from that order of men who are said to make themselves; the men who cannot be kept down; the laborious, the vigorous, the shrewd, the foreseeing; the strongest and best natural brains in the community. More particularly, be it observed, they come from the proved best men of the lower classes, whose intelligence, taken

in the unrefined lump, is now reputed to be the purest and most trustworthy in existence. Then we have to remember that a vast proportion of the wealth of the nation, and nearly all its governing institutions, have long been in the hands of the middle classes—from the omnipotent House of Commons to the feeblest town council: that they control the machinery of industry and commerce; and, besides filling the professions, occupy almost all the offices of all the Churches. Lastly, although they may have really no greater stake in the prosperity of the empire than poorer men—for a sinking British empire means a starving British people—yet they seem to have more to lose; and with a better knowledge of the world's affairs, might be supposed more keen to perceive the beginnings of misfortune, as well as more resolute in correcting unwarlike government and withstanding error in public business.

Here, then, we have reasons enough to justify those who used to tell us that the authority of the aristocratic class having died a natural death, a better day for the empire had dawned in the ascendancy of the great middle classes, and the more certainly because their sympathies struck downward. There is no difficulty at all in understanding the pretensions of these classes to govern, nor the joy of all good social philosophers at the thought that their influence must extend as their numbers increased, and as succeeding generations, more educated but not yet enervated, became accustomed to wield the power that had passed into their hands. The wonder is all the other way. There was no mistake about the conditions which should have given to the middle classes a predominant

authority in the conduct of affairs, nor any apparent error in the expectation that that authority must continue and increase as by a law of nature. The fact is, however, that after a little while there seems to be an end of it altogether. Not more than thirty years ago—between 1850 and 1860—the middle classes were acclaimed the brain and backbone, the sense and sinew of the nation; and they believed what they heard, believed in themselves, raised their voices on all due occasion, and were practically omnipotent. Now they are absolutely silent, speaking not even when they are spoken to, all nerveless, indifferent or ashamed, and to all appearance done for as a political force.

But meanwhile, perhaps, they have lost much of the advantage or many of the qualities that should have kept them in the van of affairs? Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, the middle classes are far more numerous, far more wealthy, far better educated and amalgamated, than they were thirty years ago. From above, the younger sons of the aristocracy have been dropping into the more active ranks of the middle class—"going into trade." From below, the best men of the working class are still pushing up; and there is the natural growth of families well nurtured and well equipped with money, education, intercourse, and travel for the business and ambitions of this life. Some failure of enterprise there may seem to be; but what passes for enfeebled energy is diminished opportunity. Steam-machinery may be employed in very many ways, and for many purposes; but its uses are not illimitable. There is a point, indeed, at which they must be exhausted; and there is no such field now for the ener-

getic and inventive man as there was forty years ago: a circumstance which seems to be somehow overlooked in all discussion of the condition and prospects of trade. But if education strengthens the mind, if science nourishes and experience steadies it, there must be as much of sound faculty in the middle classes as ever there was, or more. And yet we see what we see. These tens of thousands of advanced citizens have virtually given up all interference in the conduct of affairs. The humiliations which only a few years ago would have raised them like a flood, they feel not or do not seem to feel. They witness the abandonment of all the principles upon which they and their forefathers built up the most splendid and beneficent empire ever seen in the world, and have not a yea or a nay to say to it. Not only their pride—which is a most noble pride—but their prosperity suffers. They know that their fortunes are involved in the tempestuous confusion into which home politics have been whipped by “the primordial forces of society.” When they look abroad, they see the menace that rings the empire about like a narrowing circle of flameless fire; and the thought in their minds must answer to the picture of the scorpion, of which, under similar circumstances, the tail stings the head.

If they ask why all this should be, they find themselves in the presence of no mystery. Cause is as plain as consequence: the one comes into vision at the same moment as the other, as twin stars do. And whether the domestic disorder or the foreign menace is considered, the cause is seen at once to be no overruling of Providence, nothing to reduce us to patience and prayer with folded hands, but

something that deserves to be kicked under all circumstances. That the whole world is overcome by the spirit of Fatalism, mumbling about “manifest destiny” here and “manifest destiny” there, has often been remarked. But it is hardly Fatalism to submit while order, peace, pride, prosperity, existence itself, are violated and endangered by a pack of vices of the very commonest kind. Is class hatred a new thing? or is there any reason to begin to respect it as a providential medicament or as a scourge of God? What has happened to party venom, to personal spite, to disordered vanity, to gambling ambition, that they and the mischief they do should be tolerated nowadays? Nothing that anybody in this world is aware of; and yet it is to such coarse vices as these, together with another thing by no means rare or sacred—incompetency—that all the shame and the danger of the empire are due. Nevertheless, they who are most capable of understanding the evils of the time, who are most likely to suffer by them, and who are best able to make their voices heard in protest, are mum as mice.

It is a strange unnatural state of things, for which there seems to be no immediate explanation. Hitherto it has been observed that classes and castes are extremely jealous of whatever power they may have got into their hands, keen in scenting danger to their possessions and privileges, and ready in combinations of defence. At present the middle classes in Great Britain appear to have lost even such instincts as these. Considering what they are, it might have been expected that they would have risen against the shame as shame, the folly as folly, with which the affairs of the empire were carried on for

full five years. It is surely no unwarranted belief that not very long ago they would have been stung by the disgrace alone to kick out such contentious experimentalising blundering at the head of affairs. But they seem to have been moved neither by the shame nor the injury. They failed even in the commoner attribute of the middle classes wherever they exist, enlightened selfishness. They knew well enough that this is an empire of trade. Broken empire, broken trade: broken trade, broken fortunes all over the country, and in all likelihood broken crowns too. And the Queen's Ministers were not only plunging the population into the poverty implied in "broken empire, broken trade," but were teaching them, at the same time, that it is lawful, and even a duty, to knock property on the head and take its goods. And yet the middle classes, who are so deeply concerned in the destruction of our commercial prosperity and the legalising of consequent bread-riots, had nothing whatever to say to the mischief-makers: which is as if the farmer stood gazing out of window while his headman fumbled at a box of matches over a heap of light combustibles lately fetched into his rick-yard. A weakened sense of patriotism, indifference in public affairs, may be understood well enough; but it is not easy to explain an apathy like this. In presence of it, the Fatalist might very well quote his favourite saying, that whom the gods would destroy they madden; for surely this is a kind of madness, and the saying itself has survived to account for the mysterious loss of perception and common-sense which does sometimes afflict whole communities, even to their ruin.

Here perhaps we have as good an explanation as another. It may be

that through a combination of circumstances, of which some might be mentioned with confidence, the great middle classes have passed into one of those moods which overtake nations as well as men—moods which their posterity call "unaccountable." If so, then let us pray for a man to rouse them out of it, for it is a melancholy that has lasted too long. There are many, however, both English and foreign, who say that there will be no awakening from this fatal mood without a blow; then let us pray for the blow, so that it be not the crushing stroke which European Concert has been so temptingly invited to aim at an empire that would "cut up" so beautifully at its decease. Unfortunately, however, the danger that still threatens us, is of this kind. If we are to be roused by a war in the present condition of our armament and of our relations with the rest of the world, it will be a life-and-death struggle that we are roused for—a struggle like that which, though it might have ended in the destruction of all Count Bismarck's hopes, did end in Sedan and the milliards; and this is not what they mean to prescribe, perhaps, who say that we shall never be ourselves again till our blood is stirred and our energies restrung by war. In that direction there is not much to hope for—very much to fear; which is the reason why men of the highest courage in these islands, being also men of knowledge and judgment, silently admit that we must endure the shame that is put upon us, peril though it is as well as humiliation.

Where, then, are we to look for the much-desired regeneration of spirit? Maybe it will spring from the *mêlée* of parties which we shall soon witness. This Parliament is about to break up. When that

time comes, the evil genius who has so strangely imposed himself upon the country will join in the fray of the elections. The last hope of the Prime Minister must fail if he does not leave his historians to say that through all his misfortunes he enjoyed the confidence of the people; and therefore it is to be expected that he will spend the last great efforts of his life at the next general election. But he will be content with the triumph of a great majority at the polls, if that he can gain. There is little likelihood that he would live long in office with such a Parliament as the next will be; and it is too late to return to the business of opposition over again.

But as soon as it is seen that his final retirement is at hand, we shall also see such a hurly-burly of

parties and factions as this century has not witnessed. The mere anticipation of it brings to mind Carlyle's "jar of Egyptian tamed vipers, each striving to get its head uppermost." Now it may be that even then the great middle classes will remain inert. Possibly from the men of ten thousand a-year to the man of two hundred, they will continue in the dull and nerveless state in which they are at present sunk, tamely allowing demagogy to appoint the Ransom Commissioners who are to reward the masses for keeping it in office and a gold-laced coat. If they do, they will learn before long that they have fought their last fight, have lost their last chance, and have nothing before them but submission to a spell of State robbery, the natural terminus of which is a bloody civil war.

A RECENT RIDE TO HERAT.

WE were tired of Tirpul. Tirpul is the position to which, under stress of circumstances over which we had no control, the Afghan Boundary Commission had been driven from Badghis. A very good position too. In front of us was the Hari Rud, swollen by the late rains into a mighty brick-red torrent, whose surface, strewn with the wreckage of many a far-off forest, told its own tale of ruin and destruction. They said there had never been such a flood; and certainly there were no signs visible of anything like it in recent years. Spanning the river in front of us stood the one bridge which exists between Herat and Pul-i-Khatun; and though the bridge looked crazy enough to give way to a far less violent rush of water than that which then beset it, yet it finally stood up with its cracked arches and battered piers, and it answered our purpose and lasted our time. The seemingly endless winter had at last given way to spring. The bright spring hues of the Euphrates poplar and dwarf tamarisk fringed the river, red with the silt of distant hills, and furnished for it a brilliant setting when lighted by the last rays of the western sun. No one could call the scenery magnificent, but it was at least picturesque; and for a short time Tirpul proved a pleasant resting-place.

But the excitement of watching day by day for the first sign of the approaching Cossack gradually gave way to a feeling of vexation that he was taking things so easily. We knew that, after the fight at Panjdeh, 3000 Russian troops might have marched into Herat absolutely unopposed. Knowing their profound belief in the prin-

ciple of *beati possidentes* (a belief which has been most fully justified), and having been told with great candour by the few Russian officers met by our explorers and surveyors that they were on their way to Herat, there was naturally an opinion current in camp that Panjdeh was but the beginning of the end,—and the end was Herat. Exactly how far they were prepared for such an advance, of course we did not know. Neither did we know exactly how far political considerations would allow them to proceed. But we *did* know that just at that juncture there was nothing to stop them, unless it was the escort of the British Commission, and consequently we watched for their next proceedings with interest. But the interest flagged, and the beauties of the surrounding scenery became familiar; and so an order for a small party of three to proceed as far as possible in the direction of Herat, and, if possible, to see the place itself, was hailed with thankfulness. The party consisted of Colonel Stewart and two engineer officers—Major Holdich, R.E., and Captain Peacocke, R.E. Once before much the same little party had tried to reach Herat, and had failed signally. Political reasons for not even approaching the neighbourhood were forcibly urged by the Governor, and the party returned to headquarters.

Glad as we all were to be off again over new ground, or rather to see old ground under new aspects, we none of us quite expected to reach Herat. The road for two marches was familiar, and we saw what we had seen before in November, only gilded and painted by the

hand of spring. The change was marvellous. Instead of bare, brown, dusty plains, flanked by rugged hills equally bare and brown, there was a bright green stretch of prairie (it might have been prairie), besprinkled with flowers of every conceivable hue, amongst which the scarlet poppy was distinctly the most aggressive, gathering himself together with many other poppies in huge knots amongst the wormwood scrub, and covering great patches of country with brilliant red. The villages, too, had put on a clean and Sabbath-like appearance. Mud, under some aspects, is certainly clean and respectable. Perhaps it was the setting off of the fresh green mulberry-trees, or the brilliant emerald-coloured wheat-fields, or the primness of the ubiquitous poppies, here grown in rectangular beds, to make opium hereafter, but looking æsthetic and saintly at present with their spotless white heads bowing to the breeze. White poppies make the best opium, but for what reason I cannot tell. Anyhow, the effect of an Afghan village in the Herat valley in the month of May is not unlike what some of my friends may remember of the effects of an Afghan village in the month of May in the Logar and Wendak valleys, near Kabul. There are the same clean white mud walls, overlooked by a square mud fort with towers at the corners, set in the midst of the same brilliant green cultivation, in which blue-coated villagers with identical triangular spades are digging little water-courses to irrigate their fields. Also, there is the same absence of women about the place as is to be noticed about Kabul. The mountains east and south of Herat are high enough to be snow-capped. In May, Dawanda and the Saféd Koh were still white and glittering as we rode up the valley.

Although the valley of Herat is famous for its resources in cultivation, there is not much of it till the neighbourhood of the city is reached. It is true that all along the river there is a strip of well-cultivated ground, here and there widening out to almost the whole breadth of the valley; but it is only east of Ghorían that the wide stony *dasht* which forms a glacis at the foot of the flanking hills all along the valley is no longer the prevailing feature, and that the fields of cultivation develop from isolated patches into good wide stretches of land. The *dasht* is never annihilated. It is a flattish-surfaced, gravelly formation, produced by ages of detritus from the hills, rising in many places above irrigation level. Grass grows but very sparsely on the *dasht*. It is covered with wormwood scrub, which scents the air as it is crushed beneath the horses' feet, and a multitude of flowering plants, of the character of which the botanist of the expedition will no doubt inform the scientific world. A small yellow dwarf rose, with a dark centre, was very conspicuous. It grows in great profusion immediately round Herat.

After four very pleasant days' marching, during which nothing much was to be noted, except civility on the part of the villagers, and an utter absence of any attempt to interfere with our movements, we reached, on the morning of the 7th May, the village of Sakhsurmál. Sakhsurmál is a big village about four or five miles north-west of the city, but hidden from it by the rise of the intervening *dasht*. Only the tops of the minarets of the Masalla are visible from Sakhsurmál—not a yard of the walls. Here, then, was the critical point. We could go no further without the permission of the

"Naib-ul-hukmat" or Governor of Herat. Would he let us proceed or not? The first sign was not promising. A solitary horseman, who was recognised to be a servant of the Naib by the colonel, skirmished out from the village, armed apparently with a bunch of roses for a peace-offering, and said he was commissioned by the Naib to show us a halting-place there, beyond which we were not to proceed that day. He pointed out a rather extensive graveyard, through which meandered one of the dirtiest streams I have ever seen, and explained that we should find that an excellent place in which to pitch our tents. This was scarcely good enough, after coming all that distance.

The colonel thought there must be some mistake, and resolved to beard the Naib in his own den. Accordingly, a native *attaché*—Sirdar Mahomed Aslam Khan—was despatched with the hero of the roses to explain that we wished for a better halting-place than the one selected, although we were willing, of course, to go anywhere the Naib should direct. Meanwhile we sat over the remains of departed chiefs, and ate our breakfast, whilst we pondered on the situation, and awaited the result of the mission with more anxiety than any one of us cared to admit. It turned out that it *was* a mistake, due partly to the miscarriage of the letter announcing our arrival, and partly to what we believed to be the Governor's wish in making as little fuss about our proceedings as possible. A most courteous reply was given to the message. A brilliant collection of prancing horsemen were soon seen coming out to meet us. We were informed that we were to be conducted to a State garden about a mile from the city walls; there

we were to be received as the Amir's guests, and there we should find everything ready for us. The crisis was passed. From that moment we experienced nothing but frank courtesy and royal hospitality. Need I say with what alacrity we left our half-finished breakfast among the tombstones, and turned our faces to the point where the heads of the minarets above the plain showed us the first sign of that city we had come so far to see.

It was not far from the village to the garden on the east side of the city; but it took us along the rising ground to the north, within full view of the fortress, and the interest of it has left an ineffaceable memory. Past the tomb of Haji Baba, with its enclosure of stiff Scotch fir-trees, reminding me of some small bit of the outskirts of Florence; past a Masjid, with its blue-tiled dome, and the straight road from it to the north face of the fort (the only straight road in Herat); past the Masalla, whose minarets had been our landmark for two days previous; and behind all the solid-looking walls of Herat itself (they *are* solid for that matter), crowned by the old citadel, and telling the tale on their faces of many a struggle with the invader. After this panorama came the inevitable dive down off the high ground into the narrow ways of a high-walled village on the outskirts.

The chief feature of these villages is their extraordinary complexity. Every village is a labyrinth of passages and byways. Village street there is none; and the difficulty of solving the puzzle of how to get through is much enhanced by the fact that these byways serve the double purpose of road and ditch. The ditch is merely accessory to the universal

irrigation: it is not meant as a drain, for that would be regarded as useless; but it has the effect of leading the traveller into the supposition that there is no road, when the ditch is the road, and the presence of water in it is a mere accident.

Arrived at the garden, we found a guard of the Highland regiment (Herati Highlanders wear kilt *and* trousers), with many political functionaries in waiting. We were conducted inside in due form, and found ourselves at once in most charming quarters. An oriental rose-garden is a perfect thing in its way. There is enough of jungle about it to leave a sense of freedom, and enough of order and arrangement to produce the requisite effects of colour and shade. Here the roses were in their full glory; and the deep thick carpet of grass which spread round the pools of water, and up the long alleys into vineyards and orchards beyond, was a luxury which we workers in India knew how to appreciate. Here, then, we pitched our tents, and presently received a visit from a colonel of Afghan cavalry, who was commissioned to tell us that he had instructions to conduct us anywhere we pleased, and show us all that we might desire to see *outside* the city walls, but that so far the Amir's orders against entering the city were strict. However, there was a great deal to be seen, and a great deal to be done, outside the city; so we congratulated ourselves on our success so far, and girded up our loins for what was to be done outside.

Early next morning we were off to the hills on the north and north-east, which command a very complete view of Herat and the plains about it. The walls and towers and gates of Herat stood up white

and distinct out of a green sea of trees and cultivation, which fills up the valley from side to side. Only at the foot of the hills on each side a long sweeping glacis curves down to a distance of one or two miles, and leaves Herat in the somewhat unusual position, for a fortress, of occupying the lowest level in the valley. The river Hari Rud twists itself along a channel (or many channels) about four miles south of the city, and between the river and where we stood could be traced the lines of innumerable other channels intersecting the fields and orchards for cultivation. Here and there the bee-hived tops of village houses, close set, in long rows, peeped out from between the trees, but not nearly so many of them as we had expected to see. In front of all stood up the minarets of the Masalla, bent as if they too had had to recognise the force of the fierce north-western blasts with which Herat is assailed, like gigantic sentinels, broken, but unsubdued. Amongst other points of interest we visited the *ziarat* (or shrine) at Gazargah, a place which is supposed to have been the site of a Persian encampment in the days of the Persian siege. Here Dost Mohammed is buried. It is a striking place, not so much from the magnificence of the shrine itself, which has been too much battered and ruined by long years of neglect to be impressive, as from the fine trees which surround it. This is one of the few places in Afghanistan where the Scotch fir is to be seen.

A courteous visit from the Naib, or Governor, was received during the afternoon. The Naib (who is a Ghilzai) is a model Afghan chief. His pleasant genial appearance and manners would secure him friends anywhere. The

Naib is exactly the sort of man you would like to find in your host at a hospitable country house, or one of a small party at a dinner at your club. No English host could have been more English in his welcome, or more frankly pleasant in conversation. But though the Naib's reception of us was all that we could wish, we did not then know what we might meet with from the people. It must be remembered that the people of Herat are not one but two very distinct peoples. There are the ruling class and the ruled. The former are Kabulis, and comprise all the regular troops except a few Kandahar regiments; and they belong to the tribes of the north—Ghilzai, Logari, Kohistani, Paghmani, &c. The Heratis belong to the Durani tribes of the south and west; and between the north and the south—the rulers and the ruled—there is no great bond of love and sympathy. In fact the Heratis hate Kabul rule—they would prefer any other; so without entering into further particulars, it will be clear that the problem of inducing Herati and Kabuli to combine under one leader to defend the walls of their ancient city, is not one which can be seen through all at once.

Now the Heratis have always been exceedingly friendly to the British. Their friendship is no new thing. As a people they have never been otherwise. As regards the Kabuli (that is to say the soldiery) we were not quite so clear. Some of them in Herat had been in the fight at Panjdeh, and had been badly beaten by the Russians; and we had not helped them with anything but excellent advice. At least that was all that they knew themselves about the matter—all that they could be expected to see from their limited

point of view; and even that is assuming that they were duly impressed with the excellence of our advice. A little straw will show which way the wind blows, and consequently I was much pleased to find that some of the Kabuli soldiers on duty on our guard came forward and claimed the fact of old acquaintance in the Logar valley, or at Paghman, or elsewhere where my wanderings in North Afghanistan had taken me during the late war. They might have seen me there, or they might not—the claim was a friendly one, and they lost no time in explaining that they were glad to see me at Herat. Not the least emphatic amongst them was a man who had been at Panjdeh. This was a good sign anyhow, and we rode out that evening, passing by the east face of the city to the Kandahar gate, and southwards to the bridge over the Hari Rud on the Kandahar road, with the feeling that we really might enjoy ourselves for a day or two in utter security. The old bridge (the Pul-i-Malún) was worth the visit. Its present appearance is rather that of being stranded and left high and dry by the river; and it is in the same ruinous state that all else is in not immediately connected with the city itself. But it would be no great engineering feat to put it in its place again—or rather to put the river-channel once more under the bridge.

A very early ride next morning right round the city walls gave us a good idea of the strength of Herat. There is no room for argument about the statement that mud walls make very respectable defences. As for these mud walls, towering up to a height of 80 feet over our heads, I shall say nothing further than that they looked truly formidable.

The evening was a very appropriate one for a visit to the Masalla. Heavy clouds had come up, and there was a lurid look about the sky which was quite in keeping with the grandeur of desolate ruin that we rode out to see. These are the ruins of two distinct buildings (the Masjid and the Masalla) each with its central dome, flanked by high square-built wings, enclosing a gigantic court in front. The entrance to the court is below an arch, which forms by far the most prominent feature of the whole pile. These main arches must be at least 80 feet high; and as a high square wall is carried up above the crown to the height of another 40 feet or so, this arched entrance dwarfs by its enormous size both the dome and the delicate forms of the four minarets which guard the building at each corner, and which are in themselves marvellously beautiful in outline and symmetry. The face and interior of the Masalla (except the wings), as well as the exterior of the minarets, and of the domed Masjid which stands apart, covering the shrine of Shah Rukh, are all covered with enamel-work, illustrating the delicate beauty of an art which is lost. Shades of blue and green, from azure and emerald to the deep tones of indigo and of a lustrous peacock green (I don't know how else to describe it), varied with yellows from lemon to russet, including all the tints of dying and dead leaves in autumn, are blended in the devices of this *faïence*. It is not the coarse tile-work such as is common in India (though in general effect it resembles Multan pottery, which is very effective in its way), but all the delicate tracery of the design is carefully graven into the clay before the enamel is burnt on. This *faïence*, I think, constitutes the chief beauty of the

Masalla. Yet the gigantic size of the whole hill, and the halo of history surrounding the slender stems of those broken minarets, were very impressive on that still May evening. And surrounding it, of course, were ever the same saintly-looking poppies, like deceiving angels, with delicate creamy-white complexions, beguiling the senses even as they stood, and making the air heavy, faint, and oppressive.

On reaching our garden camp, we were welcomed with the intelligence that the Amir had just sent orders that we were to be received into the city itself, and that everything we wished to see was to be shown to us. The next morning was the time fixed for our entry. Accordingly, on the morning of Sunday, the 10th May, when our gallant Afghan cicerone, with a glittering staff, rode up to say that the gates were open, he found three British officers ready, of whom one at least was arrayed in all the pomp of (nearly) full uniform, and each was doing his best to disguise from the other two the intense interest he felt in the day's proceedings. Indeed we were rather a silent party as we rode over the bridge, and through the great gates of the Kutub Chak entrance, and found ourselves inside the city walls at last. We were in happy ignorance of what was going on then, or had been going on in the great political world for the previous fortnight; and if our thoughts strayed into the regions of forecast, there was not one of us who would for a moment have anticipated the news which greeted us that evening—that a temporary peace was to be purchased at the expense of full concession to the Russian demands. We believed that war was inevitable, and our thoughts were full not so much of concession as of what

small contribution we ourselves might make towards rendering concession unnecessary. It seemed so easy to ride in, after all, and make a first acquaintance with Herat. If these were our first associations with the city, what would our last be, and how would they find us?

The walls were lined with people, who, after the fashion of orientals, welcomed us silently. Astonishment seemed at first their chief feeling on the subject. Guards were posted at close intervals in all open spaces and main streets, and the clash of salutes was incessant. We rode quickly through to the quarters assigned to us. These were in a large roomy building, with a square courtyard in front, but of no particular pretensions, architecturally or otherwise. Three magnificent rooms were painted bright purple, blue, and yellow respectively, for our occupation; and the gold-leaf was laid on the cornices so thickly, that it appeared in danger of peeling off from its very weight. The floors were thickly carpeted, but the furniture was scanty, for the reason that Herati folk never use furniture themselves, and are not in the habit of entertaining European visitors. From the roof of the house a magnificent view of the city and citadel was to be obtained.

We were anxious to see all we could, and our time was limited, so, after taking possession, we started again for the main bazaar and the Charsoo. The city is very nearly a mile square, and the bazaar intersects it from north to south, and from east to west. Thus two main thoroughfares cross about the centre of the city at the Charsoo—a sort of central domed arcade. The bazaar is roofed in from end to end, consequently it is rather dark. It is also very narrow—only about 12 feet wide,

in parts extending perhaps to 18 or 20 at the utmost. These great covered streets were thronged with people; Heratis, Kabulis, Turcomans, with men of Scind and Hindustan, were there. And at every 100 or 150 yards was the inevitable guard (always on duty, we were told, and not at all there on our special behoof), whose attempts to present arms at the various words of command, given in English (amongst which I distinctly heard "Stand at ease"), resulted in a flourish of their weapons to the front, which still further narrowed the way. It was difficult to ride along two abreast.

I was not struck with the magnificence of the bazaar. There was none of the pretty colours and display of attractive goods in the shop-fronts that make Kabul picturesque, and the long uneven row of shops themselves, was an unbroken monotony of the commonest-looking little bazaar-shops that one can see in any second-rate town in India. Nevertheless our servants pronounced it a most magnificent place. Perhaps hard marching and manylong weary months away from their sunny homes in India had sharpened their appreciation. Excellent silk was obtainable, but it came from Mashad or Bokhara. I did not note one single indigenous product which could be distinctly called a specialty of Herat.

It is a mistake to suppose that Herat is in ruins. I should think that there is a great part of it uninhabited (it is impossible to tell from direct evidence), but Herat is not built of that material of which ruins are readily made; and it might all be inhabited from the look of it. Yet probably there are not more than from 12,000 to 15,000 inhabitants there at present. The view over the city from the walls, on which we walked in the evening,

is that of endless rows of domed houses, like a gigantic apiary, above which rises in the centre the larger dome of the Charsoo, and the Jamma Masjid. But all the city looked in good repair; and I have the authority of Colonel Stewart, who was one of our party, for saying that, with the single exception of Mashad, it was a more habitable-looking city than any he had seen in Persia. The most remarkable feature about Herat (a feature which, all the same, it has in common with most large Afghan villages and towns), is the absence of open thoroughfares. The way about Herat must be perfectly inscrutable to any but an old inhabitant. Many of the principal passages are but arched ways, burrowing under the houses, twisting out into daylight—and high-walled lanes here and there, with dark offensive-looking offshoots diving away off from them, and leading into labyrinths of unfathomable filth. Street-fighting in Herat would indeed be a ghastly business!

A state visit from our excellent friend the Governor was received in the afternoon. He was attended by the Commander-in-Chief, the Assistant Commander-in-Chief, several generals, brigadiers, and other smaller folk. The uniform worn by these officers might be called fancy dress; but it is so in all oriental armies,—and there was nothing extravagant or unworkmanlike about the appearance of the Herat military chiefs. They spoke courteously and very plainly about their own immediate commands.

The next morning a return visit was paid to the Governor, during which valuable presents were offer-

ed, according to Afghan custom, but declined. The peculiar feature of this visit was the introduction of a gigantic bouquet of roses—a bouquet so large that it had to be carried by two men, and set on the floor! Then followed a visit to the Commander-in-Chief—a pleasant-mannered and most intelligent-looking man—who received us in a room so high above the level of ordinary rooms, that from the open window we could look down on a parade of all the troops in Herat, drawn up in columns on the open ground below. No one impressed me more with an air of real business than the Commander-in-Chief. Another look round at the arsenal, the citadel, the walls, and the defences, and our brief visit to Herat had come to an end.

We rode out again, back to our sunny rose-garden, merely to load up and march out for one short march together. For next day we lost our political companion, the gallant colonel, who had been ordered straight back from Herat to London. Was he sorry to leave Herat? Anyway we were sorry to lose him, though we knew well that, if the campaign is to be fought out in Downing Street, he would stand as true to his colours there as ever he would (had the necessity arisen) in Herat itself. Our visit had been an unqualified success. All had welcomed us, priests, soldiers, and people. The people had swarmed in from all the country-side to see us. Again and again had we been told by the soldiers that the presence of British officers was the one thing most desired in Herat. The priests had offered up prayers in the Masjid that our entrance might prove a happy omen for Herat. God grant that it may be so!

REMINISCENCES OF AN "ATTACHÉ."

AN "ATTACHÉ," 1867.

I DON'T know how the case may be now, but when I was an *attaché* in 1867, I thought there was no more enviable being on earth. There might be ambassadors. They were such enormous guns, such big swells, such tremendously important personages, that between them and an *attaché* it seemed to me that there lay a whole life, and it was unnecessary to span such a bridge to consider whether they were personages to be envied or not.

There were secretaries of embassy and secretaries of legation; but these seemed to have outlived the gay time, and to be one and all given to the pleasurable occupation of cutting up the diplomatic list for the purpose of discovering how long they would have to wait for promotion, or pooh-poohing the services of their equals in rank, for the comfort of finding that in the race for merit they one and all distanced each other by the whole length of self-satisfaction and esteem.

There were also second and third secretaries; but while there were at best only numerical differences in the scale of salary, it was quite clear that there being two classes of secretaries, it was a body which, as a whole, was far inferior to an *attaché*, who belonged to one class only, and that a unique class, since it enjoyed all the privileges of a diplomatist, and worked for no pay. The British tax-payer could owe them no grudge: they were unpaid. Society could expect nothing of them but amusement and a disposition to enjoy themselves; and they had no responsibilities, unless it was that of not misleading the

chief by wrong deciphering or an incorrect translation.

Proud of the position, and hence delighted with myself, I had a rude awakening on a fine morning in the summer of 1867, when, being told that I was required in the ante-room, I presented myself before the benign countenance of a very portly and kind old gentleman, who begged my pardon for "disturbing a clerk at his work."

I thought I would faint. To be called a clerk was such a shock, when I had obtained so exalted a position, that I at once conceived a hatred for this old vestryman which I made no effort to conceal.

"Pray be seated."

"Thank you," he said, with a smile; "I daresay if we both stand we will relish the change, for, like you, I sit almost all day at a desk."

"What do you want?" This was said very roughly.

"Oh, I beg your ten thousand pardons. I am on my way to Russia, and wish for a passport."

I got the passport and filled it in.

"Thank you," he said; "and may I ask how much there is to pay?"

"Nothing, sir. At embassies we give passports gratis. At consulates they are allowed to charge."

All this was said with the most dignified air and look I could command. But it was of no good, for my old gentleman, quietly remarking, "Oh yes; I understand," began thumbing at his waistcoat-pocket, and presently pulled out of it a silver coin, which I had no difficulty in recognising as a British half-crown.

He clutched it, however, in his

... then placing the pass-
... his breast-pocket, and but-
... his coat very carefully, pro-
ceeded to the door, which I opened
to let him out.

As the old man was just going
through, he whispered in my ear—
"Take this; it's for you, you
know. I know what clerks are.

Bless you, they do like an occa-
sional *douceur*!"

I am sure I fainted. I felt dis-
graced, dishonoured, outcast. Had
I not fainted I must have kicked
my—benefactor.

How times are changed! I
would not at all object to meeting
more natures as kind.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Debating societies were numer-
ous in Paris, and the difficulty was
to select the best among them
when pressed by friends to join La
Tocqueville or La Molé.

I belonged for a while to the
Conférence de Tocqueville, and
still possess some of the printed
annual reports of its proceedings,
which are evidence of the conscien-
tious work done by these young
debaters, whose society I, however,
did not long frequent, owing to an
unsatisfactory tone of political bias
as I imagined and believed they
possessed; but really because most
of my friends, young men of the
Conseil d'Etat, with whom I often
associated in their gay suppers at
the Café Voltaire at the corner of
the Rue du Bac, and where more
fun, more genuine French wit, was
initiated in a night than an ordi-
nary stranger might discover in
France in a year, had pressed me
to join the Conférence Molé.

This debating society, which bore
the name of the Minister Molé, its
supposed founder, and to which
Thiers, Guizot, Berryer, and other
eminent orators had belonged, and
where they were said to have pre-
pared themselves by fiery speeches
for the legislative fights of their sub-
sequent days, was in 1869, when I
joined it, composed of equally fiery
natures, whose names I have care-
fully sought for in the France of
the present day, but only one of
whom has deserved the place in

history which has been assigned to
the original members of the Con-
ference.

The one I speak of was Presi-
dent of the Conférence Molé when
I joined, and replied to the maiden
speech which, according to custom,
I had to deliver on the first occa-
sion after my reception.

He was a broad-faced, tall, keen-
eyed man, with a sonorous voice
and a receding forehead.

His look denoted will, his man-
ner energy. When he spoke it
was impossible for attention not
to be riveted; and what he said
appeared always so earnest, that
though to an English mind it
seemed exaggerated, still it was
enough to make one comprehend
how among the barristers of the
Conférence Molé he had won his
way to the presidency.

He was a poor barrister himself,
whose talents were everywhere re-
cognised, and nowhere made use
of. He led a Bohemian kind of
existence, waiting by day for a
brief in the several courts of
justice, and spending his nights
in the *cafés* of the Boulevards or
of the Quartier Latin.

It was whispered about, but so
loudly as to be known generally,
that the President of our Con-
ference, whose vigour, manliness,
and power so much and so de-
servedly impressed us, was but
"un pauvre diable, qui doit sa
tasse de café dans tous les restau-

rants des Boulevards, à qui l'occasion manque, et qui n'a pas même celle qui fait le larron."

The opportunity did come with a vengeance a very few weeks after I had heard these very remarks; and Léon Gambetta, the President of La Conférence Molé, was launched into fame in that very year 1869.

On the 26th of February 1869, having taken for my text the relations of Church and State—a favourite subject with beginners, probably because of its difficulties—and having expressed how in principle I believed it would be in the interest of both to see them apart from one another, and how at the same time I could not vote for such a separation, considering the fearful strides which irreligion was making, and would continue to increase were the Church to lose the support of the State aid,—Gambetta got up very quickly, and after a few words of encouragement to the new member, addressed me thus: "Monsieur, it is most interesting to us to hear the views of an English Liberal on these important questions. They at once show us how you English at every age are always stopped in your finest aspirations by considerations of a practical nature. When you will have been here some few times you will see that the most advanced English Liberal is but a very moderate French Conservative. You have in England the blessing of politics without the admixture of religious bias; and you may call yourselves politically what you please, without its offending the religious sense of the people.

"In France we cannot sever religion from politics; and the reason why Liberalism is so hated by the upper and well-to-do classes is that, for some reason or another, whether justifiable or not, it is supposed to be above all anti-clerical.

"But progressive ideas must have their way, although 'Dieu me préserve de vouloir leur succès aux dépens de la modération.'"

These were the sentiments expressed to me by the man who, in November that same year, leaped into notoriety through the mistakes of a silly Home Secretary, M. Pinard, and the whim of the people to see a tomb erected to Baudin; and who was calming down into a practical and moderate statesman when death overtook him in the honourable career of his latter days.

It is the only time I ever saw him to speak to; and I believe as firmly as I can believe in anything, that in Gambetta there were two natures—the impulsive and the reflective—and that both were moved by a generous heart and a lofty disposition.

He was by no means the extreme man it pleased the Empire to make him out; but he disliked the Imperial rule so cordially that all his impulses were thrown into the balance, so as to weigh down the tottering scale of Napoleon III.

Had the war of 1870 not come upon France as a hurricane, and swept from its face the Napoleonic institutions which had been planted on such poor soil, it is quite possible that a revolution would have taken the place of foreign bayonets and called forth the energies of new men; but Gambetta would have led that revolution, just as he would have steadied it after a while, when reflection took the upper hand, and his sound common-sense showed him that excitement was well for a while but not for always.

It may be that I am only speaking as the prejudiced admirer of our old Molé President; but to deal with Frenchmen, and excited Frenchmen, which is again another race, I know no one who

could rise to the occasion as Gambetta did.

His violence in the Chambers only lasted till he had well established the fact that not even Rochefort could talk more loudly or more violently. His extreme views never militated against the

day when he could see that in the short space of ten years he had jumped from the position of an actual chairman of a debating society of young men into a more than possible candidate for the presidency of a Conservative French Republic.

"ANTONY" OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS, OCT. 1867.

The following letter from Alexandre Dumas "père" to M. Wolff, who was in 1867 editor of the newspaper 'Le Figaro,' came into my hands through a circumstance as singular as at one time it threatened to be distressing to myself.

Whether or not the great writer had caused a copy of this letter to be sent to M. Wolff, I know not; but the date on which it was written, and that on which I received it from the author himself, would point to this possibility.

On the other hand, the letter is entirely in Dumas' handwriting, and covers six half-sheets of letter-paper—a proof that the writer intended it at first to be printed, an intention which he may not eventually have chosen to carry out.

It gives the history of the drama "Antony," which when first brought out in 1830 created a *furor*, and its moral teaching did not shock the public; while it is apologetic of the criticism its revival in 1867 at the Cluny Theatre, with Mdlle. Duverger in the principal part, had called forth from the 'Figaro' and other social papers.

While in 1830 the famous cry, "Elle me résistait, je l'ai assassinée!" brought the house down with a thunder of applause, in 1867 the same cry produced no impression whatever; and among the playgoers of the day it was currently whispered that "Antony" was

rather a play to shun than to go and see.

Among others, I had been recommended to avoid the Cluny Theatre, and I minded the recommendation.

On the 17th of October, however, I was one of the four who met at dinner at the hospitable board of Alexandre Dumas the elder. I had been introduced to him a few days before, at a dinner given in his honour at St Germain by my friend Count Gorowski de Wezele, and had made such good use of my opportunity as to be invited "en famille" to "un pot au feu et une matelote, le tout de ma main."

Faithful to his promise that he would cook the dinner himself, I had an early opportunity of observing its fulfilment; for, as I rang the bell of the apartment at 107 Boulevard Malesherbes, Alexandre Dumas himself opened the door, and pleasantly greeting me, exclaimed—

"Vous voyez, je suis en manches de chemise: je suis cuisinier; et parbleu! si Monte Christo m'a valu votre connaissance, ma matelote me procurera votre amitié."

He then led me into a small back drawing-room, where he left me to continue the "eel preparation" which was to make us "lasting friends."

Presently he emerged again without a coat, crossed the room not saying a word; but soon reappeared,

accompanied by one of the most modest-looking, and if I may say so, with all due deference to the Spanish translator of Milton's poems, the most inexpressibly meaningless, specimens of humanity I had ever set eyes upon.

"Allons, mes enfants," said Dumas to us, "un peu de patience et le père Dumas vous récompensera;" then he rapidly added something about our making ourselves at home, and that his daughter would soon be with us.

My impression of the liveliness of the party was certainly damped by the entrance of this abashed young Spaniard; and by no means redeemed when Madame Marie Dumas introduced M. Galindo to me as the translator into Spanish verse of the 'Paradise Lost.'

After some delay our host appeared again at the door in a velvet jacket, and beckoning us into the dining-room, caused the Spanish literary gentleman to sit opposite to him, his daughter on his left, and myself on his right.

All passed well, and we discussed *hors-d'œuvres* and *pot au feu* with delightful appreciation of their excellency, heightened by the extraordinary powers of conversation of our host, who did all the talking.

Presently he gave a start, and with a cry, "Ma matelote!" he got up, darted into the kitchen, and with equal suddenness returned with a long dish containing eels swimming in brandy, to which fire had been set.

I never saw a face, and especially a fat face, beam with so much joy as that of Alexandre Dumas on depositing this dish on the table, and declaring to me that in England we might set fire to plum-puddings—the fire would not melt such mixtures; but in France, in his house, there was a man, a novelist, a writer, who could set

eels on fire, and the eels were liquefied. "Croyez moi," he added, "j'ai beaucoup écrit; j'ai même écrit de belles choses, mais ce que je fais de mieux c'est une matelote d'anguille."

I was much amused and much interested, and we were all of us in a high state of hilarity, when in rushed Madame la Princesse Eugénie Narishkin, who, breathless with her ascent of some sixty steps, could scarcely utter a word; but going up to Dumas, who naturally embraced her, pleaded her inability to have come before, and a host of other reasons why she had been prevented paying her "cher maître" her accustomed visit.

After a minute, however, and looking as despondent as could well be, she added—

"Mais ce qui me désole le plus c'est que je n'ai pas eu un instant pour aller admirer 'Antony.'"

Quick as lightning, and remembering only the caution given me by my friends, I thought I would gallantly rescue the poor Princess from her despondency, if the reason she gave was the whole cause of it, and exclaimed—

"Ah, Princesse, de grâce n'allez pas voir ça."

I had scarcely uttered the words when I thought the end of the world had come, and by the faces of all around, perceived I had somehow done something very wrong, though in what I had offended I most happily did not at that moment realise.

A deep rumbling grunt came forth from mine host. The Princess opened her eyes and gaped at me, as if I were some wild animal suddenly sprung upon a civilised household. Poor Marie Dumas stared, as if to say, "Good God! never has such a thing been said in the presence of my father." My Spanish friend was so dum-

founded that he looked almost idiotic.

I took in all these facial expressions, and with the serenity of innocence boldly added: "Permettez, Princesse, lisez la pièce cent mille fois, mais de grâce n'allez pas la voir si mal jouée."

Another transformation scene. Dumas' ponderous hand fell upon my arm, with the words, "Très bien, jeune homme." Madame Marie Dumas looked lovingly at me; the Princess, I felt sure, was about to cry with joy; and my Spaniard seemed to whisper to himself in Spanish the equivalent, though somewhat changed lines, to—

"The world is all before him, and Providence his guide."

The rest of the dinner passed off most brilliantly, and there was a deal of conversation carried on between the two ladies about *les charmes de l'à propos*, which I could not make out, being all along under the impression that the storm I had raised was caused, perhaps, by the author of "Antony" being a friend of all present and not of mine, and that the gratitude which followed was due to my ruthlessly sacrificing Mademoiselle Duverger and the other actors at the Cluny in order to save the author.

But my dream was a short one. As soon as I got into the drawing-room, Alexander Dumas went to his study and brought out a letter which he said he had addressed to Wolff on the subject of "Antony"; and as I had asked him for his autograph, he would give me this letter, not only as a reminiscence of himself, but as a proof of his appreciation of the manner in which the poor author of "Antony" had been saved at dinner by *le jeune attaché Anglais*.

I felt but one desire—viz., to

rush out of the house. I, however, kept myself sufficiently under control to talk for a little while on every possible subject of futility with the learned Spaniard and the artistic Marie Dumas, and then escaped, thoroughly ashamed of myself.

They must have felt that I would never dare to return; for a few days after I got from Dumas' daughter the picture of an angel, beautifully drawn by herself, with the following characteristic invitation:—

"Je vous envoie l'espérance que vous dinerez avec nous demain. Que cet ange vous suive partout c'est le vœu de, &c.,

"MARIE ALEXANDRE DUMAS."

This broke the ice: I could not send back the "angel" bearer of so kind a message. And so here is the letter in translation, which Dumas intended for Wolff, but which he gave me. It deserves perusal:—

"6th Oct. 1867.

"MY DEAR WOLFF,—Allow me to thank you for the past, the present, and the future.

"You are grateful to me, dear friend, for having been one of the first to shake hands with you on your arrival in France, and for having even then been one of the first to declare you were a man of intellect.

"You have no reason to thank me: your pen would have proclaimed it, and your writings would have proved it without my help.

"You are strange creatures, you Germans, to remember such trifles.

"Heine, with whom you have more than one characteristic in common, and of whom I even suspect you of being the avatar, thanked me on the eve of his death for having for ten years procured him distraction.

"He also could not forget. I know no memory except your own as obstinate as was that of Heine: and with less reason he could not forget that I by my 'Travelling Impressions' had made known his 'Reisebilder.'

"It is true, that had I not read the

'Reisebilder' of Heine, it is probable I never would have written 'Les Impressions de Voyage.'

"I knew another German who had almost as much cleverness as Heine and yourself, taken separately, of course.

"He wrote me a long letter to know how many minutes it required for a French name to become popular in Vienna, and how many years it required a German name to be known in France.

"His name was Saphir.

"You and Heine both took the right way of making yourselves instantly known in France, and promptly so in Germany.

"You have written in French.

"But take care if you are going to write in French for the purpose of speaking in favour of my plays, and against the censors: you will be placing yourself in antagonism with half my colleagues, and getting into trouble with the Government.

"For after all there is a precedent to 'Antony,' mutilated after 450 representations: there is my play of 'La tour de Nesle,' which was stopped after 980 performances, and forbidden for seven years.

"It is true that the play was restored as it had been stopped, without the Administration taking the trouble of giving any reason.

"Another of my plays is in a still more whimsical position: it is neither permitted to be acted nor forbidden to be played. It is allowed in the provinces, and has just been played at Marseilles and at the Havre.

"But in Paris the play is not allowed to be performed. It is true that it lies with me to have it acted. I have but a small sacrifice to make. I have but to omit the chorus, 'Mourir pour la Patrie.'

"I would like to know what the Emperor would say if he were told that a play rather Royalist than Republican was not allowed to be acted for the space of eighteen years during his reign, because in the play it was said that 'to die for fatherland is the happiest fate.'

"This is all the more disagreeable for us dramatists, that the three theatres where dramas used to be

played—namely, the Porte St Martin, the Châtelet, and the Gaieté—only produce fairy pieces now.

"And when I think that in writing 'Antony' I believed I was writing a moral piece!

"I had said to myself: The morality of a piece neither lies in the incidents nor in the style—witness the 'Mariage de Figaro'—but in the punishment or reward which the heroes of the drama meet with.

"I was one day walking leisurely on the Boulevard, and catching, or rather trying to catch, such ideas as fled across me in the air which we breathe, when suddenly this notion fixed itself on my mind—a married woman surprised by her husband in the company of her lover, and who would prefer death to dishonour—a lover who could understand this greatness of soul in his mistress, and who, accomplishing her wish, should strike her, exclaiming: 'I have killed her because she resisted me!'—it seemed to me that in all this there might be not only the elements of a great drama, but a great moral; for after all, the most passionate man would hesitate, I am sure, if he knew that, in embracing the wife of another man, he strides at once both his first and last step towards assassination and the scaffold.

"People may say what they like, but such is the idea which impresses itself as the curtain falls on 'Antony.'

"If the play be as Messieurs the Censors would have it believed, a school of immorality, the theatre of the Porte St Martin must, on the occasion of its first representation, have contained a very immoral audience; for having recognised me, there was a desperate struggle as to who should possess something that belonged to me.

"My coat was sacrificed—a poor green coat, which was certainly not at fault; but green coats were worn then, and this one was torn to bits, and the people disputed the fragments.

"In truth, I have too good an opinion of my contemporaries and of myself to believe that I was a corrupter of morals, and that all these enthusiasts were corrupted people.

"The censure must be a very heavy

burden to literature, and very unwholesome for society, since whenever there is a revolution in France the censure is the first public office to be abolished.

"And it must be likewise a very useless office, since two plays stopped by it in 1829 were played in 1830 without causing the slightest scandal, either on their first production or on any subsequent occasion.

"They were 'Antony' and 'Marion de Lorme.' The great evil of these administrative crimes is that the moral susceptibilities of the examiners are only known two or three days before the play is produced.

"The first impulse of an author who respects himself is to withdraw his work; but then come the theatre directors, who have reckoned upon it, and who, to produce it, have expended much money; the artists, who to learn the piece, have given time and memory. Finally, ten different interests, which come to beg and implore, and which it is wellnigh impossible to say nay to.

"What is one to do? One goes to the Fontaine St Michel, and one washes one's hands; so far as one is personally concerned, however.

"Alas! as a rule, only clean hands ever wash.—Once more, many thanks, my dear Wolff, A. DUMAS."

A "BON VIVANT," 1868.

Among the kindest friends I had when an *attaché* in Paris—and indeed it is difficult to particularise in the host of truly generous and hospitable Frenchmen I had the honour of being intimate with during those wonderful last years of the Empire—was a certain Marquis de Caen, a regular type of the French *bon vivant*, and a man to whom any mistake as to vintage on the part of a guest who was called upon to give an opinion as to such wonderful wine as the Marquis alone, I believe, could discover and produce on occasions, was infinitely more hurtful than a blow administered to him; for he could return the latter, but found no words to express his disgust in the former case.

He was somewhat a *sauvage*, according to his own definition of himself. He detested society; never went out; and, excepting at dinner-time, never sought for company. But to him that sacred time was not hallowed, unless he had a friend or an acquaintance to whom he could impart some of his gastronomic experiences.

The Cercle Agricole was one of his favourite resorts: for punctually at seven there was a *table*

d'hôte dinner served each day during the season, and it was always attended. Those who came later than seven were accommodated with a small table as at our clubs, but they were not privileged to sit at *la grande table*.

Owing to embassy duties and others, I was not always very punctual, and sat down at one of the little tables to discuss *solus* an excellent dinner and my usual pint of *ordinaire*. The Marquis had observed this, and was by no means pleased.

He asked the waiter why I was not at the big table.

"Parce que monsieur ne s'est pas inscrit."

"Does he know that he has to write his name down?"

"I believe so."

"Well, then, give him my compliments, and tell him that the Marquis de Caen hopes he will learn punctuality to-morrow, and will sit near him at dinner."

The message was duly delivered, and after dinner I had myself introduced to the old gentleman who had so pleasantly conveyed to me the intelligence that I had forgotten this mark of respect from a stranger to a native, and a young

member to an old member of the club.

From that moment we became stanch friends. He was a constant source of amusement to me, and the following lesson which he gave is typical of the man, while it is an exceedingly pleasant reminiscence.

Shortly after we had become acquainted, he considered it necessary to "have it out" with me in regard to a point which had sorely vexed him; so he, one evening when we were alone smoking, turned restlessly in his chair, cleared his throat, and said—

"Monsieur, permit me to ask you how old you are?"

"Twenty-five."

"And you drink ordinaire!! Comment à 25 ans, à cet âge d'or vous buvez de l'ordinaire! Cela me passe."

"But I cannot afford more costly wine."

"What does that matter? At twenty-five you are spoiling your taste; and is not a developed taste worth any money that can be spent in its education?"

"I cannot say."

"But I can; I tell you that if you cannot afford it, others must."

"That's very well, but others won't."

"Won't!"—with a shriek—"et allons donc un attaché d'ambassade, de l'ambassade d'Angleterre encore, qui me dit à la face qu'on ne lui paierait pas sa note de vin? C'est incroyable: cela n'est pas possible. Why, sir," he continued, much agitated, "to be in the country of claret and not to know it is a sin. And you are not going to tell me that you have as good in England; for I tell you, who have been fifty years at the pleasant task, no French wine can bear the sea. Le vin sent la mer à dix lieues et en la nausée: c'est comme moi; j'adore les Anglais . . .

en France: je ne me permettrai jamais de passer le détroit. Il y a la mer: le mal de cœur. Cela me fait mal rien que d'y penser——"

Finding that he was rapidly digressing, he cut himself short, and authoritatively delivered the opinion that foreign Governments should pay their young diplomats' wine-bills, and oblige them to report upon the growth of the vine throughout France.

"How I wish that could be so!" I exclaimed; "but there is little chance of the English Government seeing it in so natural a light."

"Well," said my Marquis, having exhausted his final argument, "I see I must look to it myself."

He rang the bell, and ordering himself "un grog Américain," he settled down to his plan and its development.

"What are you doing next week?" he began.

"Nothing particular; everybody seems to be asleep or out of town."

"Tant mieux, nous dînerons ensemble tous les soirs."

"Nothing I shall like better."

"Each night we shall have different wines."

"At what price?"

"Never mind the price; I will for this week defray that cost."

"I cannot let you."

"I insist."

"On what conditions?"

"That you pay attention to what you drink."

"You may be sure of that."

"And that the week after next, when we again dine together, you will pay for every bottle the vintage of which you have not correctly guessed?"

"Most certainly; a very proper condition, I think. I accept the terms with jubilation. I am quite certain that I shall not be caught tripping."

"That's right," said my old

friend, slyly, adding that he had too much regard for my ambassador, my country, and myself, to allow a friend of his to be ignorant of what France could best and most properly boast of.

"You know," he casually remarked, "that the gentlemen who are proprietors of this club are great agriculturists, and while their sons dissipate their fortunes at the Jockey Club, they console themselves here over an excellent cellar, and finish up by a mild *baccarat* in remembrance of *un jeu d'enfer* in their earlier days."

The very next day my apprenticeship began over a delicious *Cos d'Estournel* '57. The next night a *Brame Mouton* '58 was such as never to be forgotten.

The third night a *Château Lafitte* '48 was too exquisite not to dream of for days. On the fourth, a *Château Larose* was so delicate and so aromatic that I swore it never could be mistaken when once tasted.

On the fifth and sixth days other equally delicious wines were produced from the wonderful cellar of the club, and the bottles were brought in triumph by the *sommelier*, who had ever a long talk with "Monsieur le Marquis" as to a thousand details which a *connoisseur* scrapes out of the dust and grime and appearance of a bottle of old claret.

These conversations in themselves were a source of great wonder to me; and by the time the week came round I was to pay for any mistakes, I was so certain that I had before me another week of gorgeous and cheap repasts, that I offered even to bet with my friend that I would make no mistake.

Horrible dictu! and indeed the story is too sad to relate. I was some pounds the poorer at the end of the week. I had not guessed right a single time.

But the lesson had been taken to heart for having been so dearly bought.

I was never once caught tripping ever after, in so far as the club wines were concerned, a result which my friend was immensely proud in having achieved; and I never again dined at the club on mere claret and water, a fact which my purse did not relish as much as my palate.

I cannot terminate this anecdote without relating briefly another of the old Marquis.

I had asked him to dinner at Durand's *Café de la Madeleine*—an excellent restaurant, by the way—and to meet some English friends of note.

I had taken great pains to have the bill of fare composed to his taste, and was awaiting him with some impatience, all the guests being already arrived, when his burly figure came tumbling through the restaurant, and his big voice uttering loudly a request to know where was his "jeune ami, Monsieur —."

The waiters showed him into our room, when he merely said—

"Je suis en retard, mon ami; je vous expliquerai cela plus tard."

"Je ferai également plus tard la connaissance de ces messieurs."

"Le diner avant tout. Voyons le menu."

He took up the bill of fare, frowned, and, calling a waiter, exclaimed familiarly, "Jean! ne saviez vous pas que monsieur était de mes amis?"

Waiter. "Oui, Monsieur le Marquis."

Marquis. "Si vous le saviez, pourquoi diable lui servez vous un aussi mauvais diner."

Waiter. "Mais, mons—"

Marquis. "Taisez-vous: donnez-moi un crayon."

The pencil was brought: the old gentleman wrote a fresh *menu*,

placed against the various courses the several wines he wished to have served with them; and when he had done, he turned to the waiter and said—

“Prenez cela : dans une demi-heure ; nous serons ici.”

Then addressing me, he begged to be introduced to each separately. This ceremony gone through, he expressed himself thus—

“Gentlemen, Mr —— has told me I was to have the honour of meeting distinguished Englishmen. The more distinguished they are, the more necessary is it to let them enjoy a good dinner. Our

friend here,” tapping me heavily on the shoulder, “wishes, I know, to do his best for us all. He shall have as good as what his wishes are. I have taken care of that for him; and now let us walk on the Boulevard for half an hour.”

I knew not whether to laugh or to cry, to be angry or put out; but my friend was eccentric, and I thought the best way was to grin and bear.

We walked instead of dining; but when we did dine, I may safely say it proved to be the best dinner I ever sat down to,—and the dearest!

MR GLADSTONE'S OPINION OF MODERATE LIBERALS IN 1866.

If the well-considered Reform Bill of 1884 has passed into law by the help of a compromise, at least its thorough liberal character and the broad principle which it expounded precluded all possible dissent on the part of Liberals during its passage through the Lower House; but in 1866 matters were different. Lord Russell and Mr Gladstone offered a Bill of Reform which bore the mark, if not of hasty conception, at least of a want of thoroughness which at once rallied the doubtful voters on the side of the Opposition.

To reduce the county franchise from £50 to £14, and the borough franchise from £10 to £7, was on the face of all things a compromise between a sense of duty and a fear of doing it. It was a half-hearted measure which could not do anybody much good, while it was likely to be productive of considerable mischief.

There was thus some if not much excuse for the disaffection which at once manifested itself in the Liberal ranks, and it is little to be wondered at if, finding suddenly a leviathan orator to advo-

cate their cause in Mr Lowe, “the discontented and those in distress,” answering to his call from the Cave of Adullam, as Mr Bright had described the position, gave him their support, and enabled him, with the help of the regular Opposition, to defeat the Bill, and oblige the Government to resign that had introduced it.

No wonder, then, if the Adullamites or faint-hearted Liberals were anything but pleasant reminiscences to Mr Gladstone.

With these facts in mind, the following deserves the interest which I have always attached to it.

While the Ministry were awaiting her Majesty's orders from Balmoral, Mr Fortescue and Lady Waldegrave had invited a large party of political and other friends to Strawberry Hill from Saturday, June 23d, to the following Monday, and among others the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mrs Gladstone, Mr Charles Villiers, the President of the Duchy of Lancaster and Mrs Goschen, T.R.H. Count and Countess de Paris, Maria Lady Ailesbury, Lady

Airlie, Lord and Lady Amberley, Lord Cowper, Mr Hayward, Mr Bernal Osborne and his daughter, Sir Henry and Lady Seymour, Mr and Lady E. Burke, Dr Quinn, Mr Delane, and myself; while on the next day Lady Molesworth and (late) Lord Stanley of Alderley added their presence to our number.

A kind of settled gloom hung over everybody—the gloom of discomfiture, increased by the intimate knowledge that the Ministry had courted their own defeat in a great measure.

Even Dr Quinn and Bernal Osborne looked dispirited, and Hayward wore a more mysteriously confidential air than usual.

To make matters worse, Mr Villiers fell from his chair at dinner, which was deemed a bad omen.

At this juncture, happening to be near Mr Gladstone at breakfast on the Sunday morning, I ventured to ask whether he would so far honour me as to give me his autograph.

"Certainly," he said; "but you must put a question to me on paper, and I shall answer it."

I was twenty-three years of age, very proud of being in such interesting company at such a time, and therefore most anxious to justify my presence by some clever question.

I wrote down quickly the following; and, rather pleased with it, gave it to Mr Gladstone. It ran thus:—

"What is Mr Gladstone's opinion of the difference which exists in 1866 between a Liberal and a Moderate Conservative?"

Mr Gladstone crumpled up the paper, and, apparently much annoyed, said—"He did not think he could answer such a question."

I was so concerned by his look of vexation, that I went up to one of the ladies and repeated my ques-

tion to her, so as to gather from her in which way I had offended.

She nearly screamed, at least so far as that person could ever utter a sound, and asked how I could ever have been so bold.

The truth dawned upon me. The Moderate Liberals of 1866 had dissolved a powerful Liberal Ministry, and I had inquired what he thought of them, of the very statesman who had put their moderate principles to the test.

I felt all manner of uncomfortable feelings; and rejoiced that a dinner in town obliged me to leave Strawberry Hill on that afternoon.

After luncheon, Lord Cowper and I started for a walk to Ham House and to Richmond. On reaching the ferry at Twickenham, we had to wait a little while for the boat; but it came at last, and in it sat Mr Gladstone, who was returning to Strawberry Hill from Pembroke Lodge.

I very modestly bade good-bye to him without any allusion to my indiscretion of the morning; but with infinite kindness and charm of manner, he said, "I have not forgotten you," and pulled out of his pocket my original question and his characteristic answer to it.

"STRAWBERRY HILL,
June 24, 1866.

"The word Moderate, as far as my observation goes, does no great credit—according to the manner in which it is now used—either to the word Liberal or to the word Conservative. Every Liberal claims to be Conservative: every Conservative to be Liberal. I know of no solution of the question between them except the test of their works.—Yours very truly,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

My indiscreet effort at being clever had succeeded after all, for here was a letter which better described his own thoughts than a thousand oral explanations of them,

and which to an outsider told nothing.

The delightful "now" before the word "used," and the contempt in "the test of their works," were

gems to those who read it at the time, which have made me value this letter more than any I have received from the same source since.

QUEER FOLKS, 1867.

Among the people who daily called at the Embassy, many turned out to be types of the strongest marked character. Some came, as it would seem, from sheer desire of being able to say that they had called there on business, while their so-called business consisted in asking questions of the most futile character. Others would request favours which it was impossible to grant, and when informed of this, were excessively annoyed and more than enraged—often threatening to write to the 'Times' newspaper and expose the unwillingness of the paid officials at the British Embassy to accede to any request lawfully made by a British tax-payer.

But the great mass who came were mostly applicants for presentation at Court, and with some of these I had singular experience.

It was a rule which was strictly adhered to, that no British subject who had not previously been presented at his own Court, should have a right to claim from his Embassy the privilege of being introduced at the Tuileries.

Many got to Court through other means; but during Lord Lyons's judicious rule, no one that I can remember ever infringed this regulation, and he always knew everything about the candidates for presentation whom he admitted on his limited list.

The knowledge that he was very particular on this point made his secretaries equally careful in their investigations on any such request being made to them.

Early in the spring of 1868, a card was handed to me from a gentleman, who wished to see one of "ces messieurs" in the ante-room; and as I came in I found a very well-dressed and apparently very aristocratic-looking Englishman, who, both in manner and voice, showed that he belonged, as indeed his name indicated, to our very best society, albeit he was not titled.

Having begged of him to sit down, I took a chair opposite to him, and still holding his card in my hand, began to twirl it between my fingers while he proceeded to inform me that his desire was to be placed on Lord Lyons's list for presentation to the Emperor at the next Tuileries ball.

He added that he was a magistrate and a gentleman, but that he had many troubles.

I thought while he was speaking that he showed signs of being somewhat unhinged in mind, and as he mentioned his troubles I was very much interested.

Still I twirled away at his card, listening attentively to what he had to say; and when he had finished, I promised him to mention his name to the ambassador, though I added, by way of caution, that as only a certain amount of presentations were allowed at each ball, I could not, of course, say how far the list was or was not complete for the next Tuileries festivity.

"I have your name and address," I said, "on this card."

"Yes," he remarked, somewhat

sullenly, as I afterwards remembered, "if you can decipher it in its present state."

I duly reported my friend's wishes to the chief, adding that, in my opinion, I thought this most worthy Englishman was somewhat demented, though I had nothing in the world to go upon except the impression conveyed on me by his mournful conversation; and I could not help thinking that so sad a gentleman would be out of place in the gay assemblage of the Tuileries.

In the exercise of his judgment—and no man that I ever met throughout my life possessed or possesses that quality to so eminent a degree as Lord Lyons—my candidate was not included in the list of presentations.

Whether this rebuff constituted a fresh trouble in the mind of the gentleman in question, or whether, like other English tax-payers, he was furious with the Embassy for not at once acceding to his request, I know not; but some little while after, a despatch arrived from the Foreign Office, which, written in Lord Clarendon's most genial style, inquired why I had twirled a gentleman's card while he was speaking, and drawing a moral for the future especially to avoid so incongruous a proceeding.

As the French say, "*Je me le suis tenu pour dit*"; but that the first time I should be mentioned in despatches was to inform me not to twirl a gentleman's card, was what I so little expected, that my astonishment got the better of my regret; and instead of pitying my friend, I made up my mind that first impressions are right, and that he was mad.

The applicants for the protection of the Embassy formed another class of curious people, who taxed our intelligence in discovering

whether they had a *bond fide* claim or not, and our purse in the discharge of oftentimes very ill-placed charity.

One famous individual was wont to take his summer trips entirely at the expense of the several legations, embassies, or consulates he found on his way from Heligoland to Italy. He was well known to us in Paris; and I well remember his astonishment when, some years later, he called at a Legation in Germany, where I was acting as *Chargé d'affaires*, and requested to see me.

He began his usual story, that he was a poor man called away from his home in the far north to a dying relative in the far south, and obliged to walk the whole distance and beg his living on the way.

"From Heligoland on your way to Florence," I said.

Involuntarily he looked up, and voluntarily made a rapid exit.

But the hero of this story was of a very different type.

I was very busy one afternoon, and rather anxious not to be disturbed, when the chancery servant apologised for intruding by exclaiming that there was a species of maniac in the hall who insisted on seeing a member of the Embassy, late though it was, as his case brooked no delay, and he required protection against the villany of the French authorities.

Sure enough, when I emerged into the hall I saw a man evidently suffering from rabies, or some frightful injury which it only required a last conversation at the Embassy to go and immediately avenge on some one or on many.

I could scarcely calm him, so excited was his manner, so violent his language; but at last I pointed out that unless he would moderate his feelings there was little chance either of my knowing his purpose

or understanding his case, and he cooled down a little.

"Sir," he exclaimed, "I have been grossly insulted: I care not for that. My wife has been grossly insulted: I care not for that either; but I am a British subject—I pay taxes—and it is the duty of the Embassy to protect me, to see me righted."

I could not help remarking that if he cared not for the insults he and his wife had received, though he had not told me what they were, it seemed to me that there was no cause for interference.

"What, sir! not interfere? Not protect a British subject? What are you here for? Yes, sir; what are you here for? I repeat, what is the good of an embassy?"

"To see their countrymen righted, if there is fair reason to suppose that they have been wronged."

"Well, I have been wronged."

"Sir, my time is precious; and unless you can tell me more about your case than I have as yet heard, I must wish you good morning." And I rose to depart.

"Stay, sir," he said, "and listen, then, to my story. That I should be obliged to tell such a tissue of insults and injuries done to me and my unoffending wife; but I will have compensation, that I will: compensation from the railway company, from the customs officers, from the French Government. You see if I don't."

"Your case, sir, if you please."

"Me and the wife were travelling from Switzerland to Paris, and at Belfort they told us to get down because they wished to examine us. I remonstrated, and told them that I wished to get on my way as soon as possible, as I had business in England to attend to. 'You can do that after we have seen to our business,' they said, and the signal was given to the train to start, leaving us and

our luggage on the platform. Presently we were separated and searched, and at last I discovered that they believed us to have stolen a watch, and that we had this watch in our possession."

"May I ask," I said, "what is your profession?"

"I am a watchmaker by trade."

"Thank you."

"They did not find any watch, and then they let us go. But I ask you, sir, are we to be arrested, searched, and insulted like this, without compensation for loss of time, and for the injury done to our reputation?"

"Stop a bit," I said; "had you any friends with you?"

"No; but the whole of the passengers saw the arrest."

"But did any of them know you?"

"No."

"Of course you have done quite right to come here, for undoubtedly it would be our duty to see you righted could you place us in the position of doing so."

"But I have."

"I beg your pardon, you have done nothing of the kind; and allow me to say that, being accredited here to a foreign Court, we should naturally require to hear what the French authorities have to say in the matter, before we could ask for reparation of the insult."

"Never mind that, sir; compensation is what I want."

"Still more for compensation; let me, therefore, ask you a question or two. Can you bring us a witness of this sad occurrence?"

"No, sir."

"Not a single person who, having been in the same train, could speak to the incident as one which was not properly or legally conducted?"

"No."

"Nor any one who has known

you in Switzerland, and was travelling with you?"

"Nobody."

"That is a pity. You are a watchmaker, I think you said?"

"Yes, sir."

"And were improperly accused of stealing a watch?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is very unfortunate indeed, for, look at it yourself from a sensible point of view. Nothing was found on you, therefore nothing could be then proved against you; but your being interested generally in watches might cause further researches to be made which might prejudice you in England where you are known, whereas no one knowing you here, they can do you no harm. My advice to you therefore is, drop this business, which might, after investigation, prove to be a trumped-up story after all: pocket the affront, and go home as quickly as you can."

The man stood silent a minute, then taking his hat with both hands said: "Thank you, sir; I never saw it in that light before," and departed.

On another occasion a young man, who represented himself as a medical student and a Peruvian, asked for me by name, and informed me that the mail which brought him his monthly remittances from his family in Lima had this time arrived without the usual letter for him, and that he was therefore destitute of all means. Alone and without friends he had bethought himself of a relative and namesake of mine, who was then British Minister in the Peruvian capital, and had ventured to ask me for assistance on the ground that his father was well known to the English envoy.

The appeal was made in so straightforward a manner that I was most anxious inwardly to

believe in it, and if possible to answer it.

"How much do you require?"

"Five hundred francs."

The sum staggered my benevolent intentions, for I knew I had not that amount to spare; and if I had, its large figure suggested nearer inquiries into the legitimacy of the request thus suddenly made.

The young man must have read what was passing through my mind, for he at once proceeded to divest an album he had wrapped up in a newspaper, and to remark that he had not come without a security, though he did not know how I would like its nature.

"This is," he said, "a collection of autographs, and contains all the signatures of the present members of Congress in the United States, besides a great many others which I have had some difficulty in obtaining."

I looked at the book with an interested eye, and asked him whether he considered the members of Congress to be worth £20.

"I have had the book valued," he said, "and that is the sum put upon it."

I relented again, and my thoughts were balancing between duty and extravagance, and they at last arrived at what I believed to be a happy compromise.

"I will not lend you any money."

The poor fellow seemed about to faint.

"But I will have this book valued on my own account."

He seemed quite pleased again, which was a proof to me that he had said true when he declared he had had it valued.

"If," I continued, "it is worth the money you say it is, I will then arrange with you as to its ultimate purchase; but if it is not, I am afraid my means will not allow of my being any great help to you. At any rate, I will

not take a book you value as a security."

My Peruvian then asked whether I would, in consideration of the great distress he was in, owing to his rent falling due, lend him £10 now, and arrange for the rest after I had had the autographs valued.

The man seemed so honest in all his behaviour that I at last consented, and told him that if the book were valued at £20, I should put £10 in an envelope addressed to him, and leave it with the porter of the Embassy until he called for it. Meanwhile, I lent him the sum he asked for, and he went away as happy a being as ever I beheld.

This was in 1867.

I had the book examined and valued by a professional expert, and it was estimated to be worth £20.

The remaining £10 were therefore duly deposited in an envelope addressed to the Peruvian student, and deposited where I had told him he might find it.

When I left Paris in March 1870 the envelope was still there; and on my return from the East in 1872, I found that the envelope had successfully weathered the Prussian siege and the days of the Commune.

In 1873, on my way to England from Germany, I saw my envelope again; but this time I took possession of it, and having the autograph book with me, took it to Messrs Puttick & Simpson, at whose auction-rooms the members of Congress obtained a very complimentary price set upon their signatures.

To this day I have never heard of my Peruvian friend; but he cannot owe me a grudge for leaving a £10 note idle for more than six years, when he remembers that, although a total stranger, I spared him a whole month's trouble and anxiety, and stood to him indeed the friend in need he came to seek at the British Embassy.

We were not always so fortunate, and many a scoundrel worked upon our feelings with success, without even allowing us after the generosity was perpetrated to preserve the illusion that we had done what charity commanded.

I cannot, however, dismiss the subject of queer folks without mentioning a very touching little incident related to us by a member of the Austrian Embassy, at the head of which in those last days of the Empire was Prince Richard de Metternich and his clever Princess.

A Hungarian band had got into trouble, and their instruments had to be pawned. In their distress they appealed to their Embassy: produced the pawn-tickets for their instruments, and begged that they might be allowed to borrow the amount necessary to redeem these objects on which their daily bread depended.

A subscription was got up, and the money handed to the master of the band as a loan.

Some months elapsed, and like all such loans it was no longer thought of except as mistaken charity, when Prince and secretaries were suddenly visited with an avalanche of Hungarian sounds, played unmistakably by a band of veritable Hungarians, who were determined to give to their Czardacs the most inspiring effect.

In a moment Europe and its affairs were forgotten, and the Austrian Chancery were at the windows, when presently the bandmaster, in Hungarian costume, advanced and begged for an interview.

When he was let in, he produced a little purse, and with a respectful bow handed it to one of the secretaries as containing the sum which had been generously lent to redeem their instruments, and forthwith proceeded to play the Austrian National Anthem.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART V.

CHAPTER XVII.—MORAY MAKES UP A SHOOTING-PARTY.

It is a ridiculous arrangement which keeps London society simmering in double-baked bricks and smoking mortar down to the very dregs of the dog-days. The lords and the ladies of the loveliest scenery in the three kingdoms, deliberately prefer the dull prose of "society" to the poetry of nature, and leave the freshness of the fields and the fragrance of the flowers for confinement behind the prison-bars of their basement areas. Among caviare and curries, and other acquired tastes, surely none is more capriciously extravagant than that of inhaling the noxious gases of the town, when the good of the land of England, to say nothing of the Continent, lies before them. To turn day into night in crushes, with the thermometer at 85°, making the digestion of dyspeptic dinners an impossibility; to tempt the overjaded appetite with truffled *pâtés* and plovers' eggs and champagne, when they should be sweetly locked in the embraces of Morpheus; to waken from weariness to the drudgery of the inevitable round—for to-morrow is as yesterday and as many days before it. It is all a matter of taste and fashion, of course; but were they condemned to the life they are pleased to lead voluntarily, the lot of convicted criminals might seem enviable by comparison. These at least have a chance of getting into condition on the treadmill; and after the jail delivery they come out with the satisfaction of having economised their constitutions, in place of having drawn heavy drafts upon them. Yet it is almost pitiful to see how

natural sensibilities survive in spite of the demoralisation that is consecrated by tradition. A blighted clematis or blackened ivy trails its tendrils sadly round the dining-room windows; and the millionaire, self-banished from his gardens, gives a florist *carte blanche* to renew the bloom in the flower-boxes in the windows. Those who have Edens of their own within easy reach, go for the daily drive or ride by the Serpentine, and gladden their eyes with the beds of Park Lane, which are the natural delight of the London destitute. But there is good in everything, as Shakespeare remarked; and it is an ill wind that blows good to no one. London tradesmen grow rich in spite of the competition of the co-operative stores; and fashionable physicians fatten on the maladies of their fellow-mortals.

We do not deny that there are bell-wethers to lead the flock, who are never really happy anywhere out of London. We know that the disreputable old Duke of Queensberry, who loved society, probably because he did not care to be alone with his conscience, declared that it was the best place to live in, in the season or out of it, because there were always more people in it than anywhere else; nor can we imagine a George Selwyn making himself happy in Gloucestershire, or a Horace Walpole in Norfolk. But as a rule, in most *habitués* of Mayfair and St James's, there is still so much of the healthy human instinct, that they welcome the day of their release from the grimy bondage they impose on

themselves. Nay, they may argue with much philosophical truth, that they evolve good out of evil, and pleasures from previous suffering. As the wise man who is setting his face towards the Riviera in the winter, will wait till our frosts and fogs have made him thoroughly miserable here; so the Alps or the Highlands, even the dulness of the German baths, will seem delightful by way of contrast to the purgatory of Pall Mall. And if that be the experience of the hardened votaries of fashion, who are lulled to sleep by the rattle of the wheels, and try to see reflections of their heaven in the glare of the gas-lamps, how much more must it be the case with those who are caught up in the fashionable whirl, chiefly because they are able to afford its dissipations! Had it not been for the sake of his daughter, Moray would never have spent more than a week or two in London. The house in Eaton Place, which he was bound to inhabit, was an incubus that often lay heavy on him. As for Grace, she was young and fond of gaiety: she had been followed and flattered by compliments, paid gracefully or clumsily; and she had made sundry conquests, more or less serious, which she estimated pretty much at their value, but which, nevertheless, pleased her. She liked dancing; the mere excitement of the exercise freshened her up, however fagged she might be; and to the very end of the season, like a well-bred but overtaken hunter, she pricked her ears to the sound of the waltz, and went best pace over the floor, with elbow-room and a satisfactory partner. Nor did she look so pale as might have been expected, when she came down the next morning to breakfast. Yet even Grace, though in her

first season, began to feel that she had enough of the pleasures of the town. She found herself envying her friends who had already gone off to the country. Notwithstanding her southern training, she was a true Highland lassie at heart: often the Serpentine would fade from before her eyes, giving place to the wild shores of Loch Rosque or Loch Conan; while, though dinners at Richmond or Greenwich were all very well, she would have given the views from the Terrace or the Trafalgar for a glimpse of Ben More or Funachan. The Morays had stayed on in town longer than they had intended. Moray, who always did with all his might all that his hand designed to do, declared that he had work in East London which must be disposed of, before he could leave with an easy mind.

But at last the day of their departure had come, though not before the second week of August. It is hard to say which of the two had looked forward with more enjoyment to their return to the hills. Moray's original intention and desire had been to have his daughter all to himself for a week or two; but accidents, or rather his natural hospitality, had been too much for him. Had they gone north a little sooner, the *été-à-été* might have been managed, but the delay had put it out of the question. The Twelfth would be upon them in a day or two: Donald had sent the most glowing account of the grouse prospects; and it would be churlish and dog-in-the-mangerish to keep the birds all to one's self. Moray felt bound to ask Jack Venables for the grand day; and Jack, who had been looking out for the invitation as a matter of course, had already, with his usual forethought, secured himself leave of absence. Jack once asked, it be-

came imperative to include Leslie in the party, not only because otherwise he might well have felt hurt, but on the principle of holding the balance even between the two. Leslie, in his civility, had made a hesitating answer.

"You know I don't much care about shooting; and if you want to fill the bags, and figure creditably in the county papers on the Twelfth, you had better let me postpone my visit. I shall always find the rocks and the river, the balmy air on fine days, and the storms sweeping down from Funa-chan; and you know that is what I like the best."

But neither Moray nor Grace would hear of that.

"Come to us, you must and shall," said the former; "that is to say, unless you have any more enticing engagement. It would not be a family party without you; and a family party I mean to have, after those months of living at a loose end in London here. And as for shooting or not shooting, of course you can do as you please. You should be much more the master of Glenconan than I am, now that you have identified your genius with the place. You must come to be inspired for a second volume, that shall assure immortality to our sequestered glens. No doubt you will become a nuisance to us sooner or later; but that is one of the penalties of fame. We shall have troops of tourists trespassing on our solitudes, crowds of poetry-stricken pilgrims scaring the deer. I believe Donald Ross to be devoted to the Celtic bards; but after all, as they sang in strains which nobody understands, they are as little appreciated as Ossian by the Southerners. When Donald realises all you have done, and learns that you have pulled the string of a perpetual douche-bath

of trespassers, he will bear you a grudge you will never get over."

As may be gathered from that unusually prolix speech, Ralph Leslie had greatly advanced in his uncle's good opinion. In his good opinion, that is to say, so far as the gifts that help a man forward are concerned. For since it had become an open secret everywhere that Leslie was the author of the much-admired volume of poems, his company had been greatly courted, and had he been the sort of man to have his head turned, it should have been well-nigh twisted off his shoulders. Moreover, it was just as little of a secret that the book had sold extraordinarily well. Mudie, as well as Mr Smith and the minor purveyors for the public, had kept sending in fresh orders. With all the practical sleight-of-hand of the circulating librarians, they could not supply their customers sufficiently quick. Besides that, 'The Idylls of the North' was a book which, unlike the ephemeral "trash" turned out by us, the professional spinners of fictions, commanded a very considerable private sale. It was the sort of gift-book to be interchanged by sentimental young ladies who found the masculine spirit it breathed act as a tonic on their languishing temperaments. It was the kind of book that a sighing lover might send to his mistress, with passages marked that gave eloquent utterance to the vague thoughts he could hardly hope to express. Moray cared little for the pecuniary aspects of the matter—he did not much believe in the possibility of making a fortune by the pen—but he did think a good deal of the celebrity. He admired the genius he had scarcely cultivation enough to appreciate; and confessed that Leslie was treading a far loftier path than

that which as a dashing adventurer he had walked over with tolerable success. And if the sober Moray was so far impressed, we may imagine that his more romantic daughter had followed suit. She said nothing to back up her father's pressing invitation; indeed she saw that it was quite unnecessary. But Leslie, when he looked up to consult her eyes, had no longer any hesitation in assuring his uncle that he would gladly take him at his word.

What with rambling passages and wasted space, there was no great number of guest-chambers in the old house of Glenconan. But when once the *tête-à-tête* had been broken in upon by the presence of his two nephews, Moray decided to make the most of his accommodation. Two or three other men had been picked up for the opening of the shooting season, all of them keen sportsmen, and reported to be crack shots. There was Mr Calverley Baker, member for Pontypool, partner in the wealthy firm of Welsh ironmasters, and one of the most promising of the young Opposition speakers in the House. There was the M'Claverty, chieftain of the clan of that name, and a far-away cousin of the laird's, who drew a handsome revenue from his barren heritage, now that it had been parcelled out in deer-forests, grouse-moors, and sheep-farms. And there was General Battersby, who, though getting on in years, was active as ever, who had been a gay young subaltern five-and-twenty years before, when Moray had made his acquaintance in garrison at Hong Kong.

When Jack Venables heard of these additions to the party, he would have undoubtedly made a wry face, had not his features been under command. Old Battersby was all very well, and a capital

companion either on the hill or in the smoking-room, though, with a touch of the formal courtesy of the older school, he was always saying something complimentary to Miss Moray. But Calverley Baker and the M'Claverty might just as well have been omitted. They were unmarried, rich, rattling, and consequently eligible; and Jack, though self-confident, was not unnaturally somewhat jealous, and looked upon all men as possible rivals. However, as there was no help for it, he resigned himself to the inevitable; and after all, he felt in his heart that as Leslie was "favourite" in the race, "the ruck" counted for little. He cared still less, one way or another, when he heard that a certain Mr Maitland, formerly a merchant in Shanghai, with his wife, who was rather a friend of Grace's, were to fill up the house. A few days afterwards, however, his uncle had incidentally returned to the subject.

"I have just had a call from Maitland, who came to throw me over; and a nuisance it is, for I hate having my plans upset; though I have no right to be out of temper, and it is worse for him than for me. It seems his liver is out of order, and Jenner has ordered him away to Carlsbad. I always thought he was too hard on that old Madeira of his, though I must say it was enough to tempt any man. How well I remember it myself in Shanghai; and the East is the only climate to enjoy the wine. However, he can't come, and I am exceedingly sorry. You see I am filling the house with guns, and his wife would have been a nice companion for Grace. I hardly know whom to ask in place of them."

"No difficulty about that, sir, I should say. I could name a score of your acquaintances off-hand who

would give their ears to go down to Glenconan."

"Possibly. But a party in a Highland shooting-quarter is like a salad: a mistake in the mixing simply poisons it. Now I thought the Maitlands would have given it flavour, without disturbing the harmony. But come, Jack, I see you have an idea—you always have—so let me hear what you suggest."

"I was only thinking, sir, that you and Mr Winstanley get on capitally together; and I believe that he would be too glad to make one of the party."

"The Winstanleys? Why, it was only the other day he told me that they were all going, for a month or more, to his brother's place in Shropshire."

"If you care to have him, ask and try. I am willing to lay two to one on the result."

"You speak oracularly, Master Jack. What do you mean?"

"Why, just this. I ought to know Mr Winstanley pretty well by this time; and after having had something like six months of domestic bliss, I fancy he would welcome a bachelor holiday, if he could only find a decent excuse. He likes your company beyond all things; he likes Leslie, he likes me; and after all I have told him of the place, I know he has a longing to see Glenconan."

"Well, if we can prevail on him, I am sure I should be delighted. And if he brought his daughter, she could keep Grace company instead of Mrs Maitland. The girls seem to get on very well together."

"I don't think that would do," exclaimed Jack, with great decision. "Mr Winstanley could hardly bring his daughter without offering to take his wife,—which, to be candid, I don't think he would con-

sent to do, even supposing you could put the whole of the family up."

For though Jack believed his regard for Miss Winstanley to be purely platonic, on the whole he foresaw considerable embarrassment in having both of the beauties on his arms at once. At all events, his argument seemed unanswerable to his uncle, who declared that he could not undertake to make both the ladies comfortable. Moreover, Mrs Winstanley rather oppressed him; and when he went down from Eaton Place to the Highlands, he fully meant, metaphorically, to exchange the Court suit and ruffles of his London life for the ease of a loose shooting-jacket and knickerbockers.

But with the Hon. Mrs Winstanley's husband, it was a different affair altogether. Brought together originally by Jack Venables, the ex-diplomatist and the ex-merchant had struck up something very like a friendship. When Winstanley had reminded Moray of having met him long before at our Minister's table in Peking, the Highlander had rather abruptly changed the subject. As we know from his frank talk with Leslie, those early Eastern reminiscences of his were at once a pleasure and a pain. How gladly would he have lived the life over again in all senses, with the exhilarating stimulus of its perpetual excitement, and the mistakes that might be rectified or avoided! But though, with his regrets and its pleasures, it was perpetually in his mind, he did not care to talk of it with strangers, still less with a singularly well-informed man like Winstanley, who might be supposed to know some of the secrets of the trade by which Moray had made his money. Nevertheless, it proved to be something like the case of

Johnson's meeting with Foote at Fitzherbert's dinner-table: "I was resolved not to be pleased; . . . but the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork and laugh it out. No, sir—he was irresistible." Winstanley was so pleasant a companion that Moray was pleased in spite of himself. And Moray came to draw to him at last, for the very reasons for which he had at first shunned him. Winstanley, though an honourable man according to his lights, was no fastidious moralist. He drew a line which, as a British diplomatist, he had never passed himself; but he admired the dash of the free-traders who had gone beyond, being fettered by no official responsibilities. He was far too well-bred to persevere with disagreeable subjects in ordinary circumstances; and he could not help remarking that, when he touched on oriental matters, Moray was ever ready to turn the talk. He may have attributed that reserve merely to the natural modesty of the man. At all events, he would work round to the topic again and again, showing an interest in it that was somewhat out of keeping with his character. Had he appeared to have any ulterior motive, Moray would have shut up like an oyster, and let it be understood very unmistakably that he would not be forced to speak. But Moray's penetration seldom deceived him, and he was persuaded that this man of wider experiences than his own was veritably amused and interested. As Winstanley had said once, in a moment of unwonted expansion on both sides—

"It does delight my heart to listen to you, Moray. You are as good as a romantic volume of travel, sport, and adventure, with all the padding left out; or rather

you are worth a whole library of volumes, when we can prevail on you by some chance to do yourself justice. There is nothing I should like much better, even at my time of life, than to take a passage in a P. and O. boat to Hong Kong, and to go coasting down the Malay Peninsula to see what that new company proposes doing in Sumatra, and whether it is worth while going in for investments. Unfortunately it is too late; Mrs Winstanley would sue for a separation if I proposed it; and fancy the horrors of a voyage in the tropics if one were laid on the back by a fit of the gout. No, going is out of the question; so the next best thing is making the journey under the guidance of a man who is the personally-conducting Cook of tropical tours in the fancy."

That Moray believed to be the actual state of the case; and believing it, he became so ready to talk, that at last it was he who would sometimes lead the conversation in that direction. Winstanley, as a rule, was by no means addicted to letting anybody else indulge in monologues. He liked to hear himself: to do him justice, he was generally worth listening to, and nobody was more quickly bored. But he treated Moray as something between a melodramatic piece at the Porte St Martin and a sensational romance by Jules Verne. He could come and take him up at any time, without being tied to hours or to cramped stalls in the pit; without even the trouble of holding a cumbersome book, or the necessity of denying himself his cigarette. So it came about, that very often of an evening the two men met in one of their smoking-rooms, for it was only coarse tobacco Winstanley objected to. The emotional side of Glenconan's Celtic nature would get

uppermost: he would rise out of his lounging-chair and tramp across the room, half acting the scenes he so dramatically described; while his audience of one would keep him up to the mark by paying him the compliment of the most intelligent attention.

Really, on these by no means rare occasions it would have been worth while to put either eye or ear to the keyhole. Winstanley would leave a business-like Board meeting in the City, or the whist-room at the "Travellers," to pass the latter hours of the night in a gilded mirage of cigarette and cheroot smoke, conjuring up a succession of mental pictures that were vividly stamped on the mental retina next morning, and which his memory was always recalling through the day. Well might Jack Venables opine that he would be willing to accept an invitation to Glenconan. Jack seldom spoke confidently except on a certainty; and more than once Winstanley had expressed a warm admiration for his uncle.

"You neglect your opportunities, Jack, in not joining us more often, though perhaps the nabob might be less animated in that case; for he seems to think that two are company and three are none. Till I got him into the habit of those *tête-à-tête* rehearsals of the past, I had not the faintest idea of half that is in him. If he has not been everywhere—for there, at least, I have the advantage of him—he has done almost everything man could do within the sphere of his indomitable activity. Sometimes I think he is just the fellow to do it all over again; sometimes I don't—for occasionally, when the excitement dies down, I could almost fancy that he looks back regretfully, which, of course, must be absurd. But I tell you, sir, again,

you ought to hear him when he shows to most advantage; it is better than any number of plays, even as plays used to be when I was a boy."

"Why, sir," Jack might say, "if ever my uncle should come to grief, according to you, he might make his fortune on the boards."

"Or in lecturing on 'Passages from my Past,' in the States—the sort of thing that seems to be the fashion nowadays. But no—that would never do; he is far more self-conscious than any of his friends suppose, and he wants a select and appreciative audience of a solitary listener. As I said, however, you ought to hear him. Now we are becalmed off the banks of surf, breaking over coral-reefs, with unearthly stillness brooding in the air, before the tornado bursts from the storm-clouds; and nothing to be heard in the meantime but the creaking of the blocks on board, or the screams of the sea-fowl floating towards the shore. Now we have got up the back of a tyrannical Rajah, who is hesitating between ordering us off to immediate execution, or handing us over to the tender mercies of the tormentors; or we are threading the jungles, looking over our shoulders in terror, expecting a flight of poisoned arrows out of the thickets; or we are awakening from pleasant dreams of Scotland in a hammock slung in the shade of a spice-grove, to see a cobra or an anaconda hung up by its tail, with its forked tongue within an inch or so of our opening eyelids. But I only say again, you ought to hear him."

While, if Winstanley was willing to go down to Glenconan, Moray, now that it had been suggested, liked the idea of having him there. Though in the bottom of his heart—or rather, in the depths of his conscience—he was inclined to

distrust this new friend as an evil genius. That good-humoured companion, with his easy philosophy, was the very opposite of Ralph Leslie. Had Moray been under sentence of death, it was Leslie he would have sent for to play the confessor. But when the world, with its wicked old memories, got the upper hand, Winstanley was assuredly the more agreeable companion. A man, too, whose honour there was no impeaching, and who was welcomed

as the embodiment of integrity on the best Boards in the City. Yet, upright as he was, and with his unblemished antecedents, Moray would never have dreamed of submitting his scruples to him. Not because Winstanley would have condemned, but quite the contrary. He would have ridiculed the scruples he could not even understand—if ridicule had not been a breach of good manners; and Moray, though he might wish to be convinced, had no desire to be deluded.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A BUDGET OF NEWS, GOOD ———.

For reasons best known to herself, it occurred to Miss Winstanley that it would be pleasant to accompany her father to the North. Not by any means that Wrekin Castle was likely to be dull, for her uncle was sure to fill it with company. Her first idea was to sound Mr Venables in all good-fellowship, as to the possibility of getting an invitation. On second thoughts, and again for reasons best known to herself, she changed her mind, and applied to her father. Winstanley was no such doting parent as Moray; and yet Julia, though with more trouble and diplomacy, generally succeeded like Grace in getting her way. Had she not known him well, when she broke the matter to him, his manner of receiving the proposal would have effectually discouraged her.

"Nonsense, my dear. It would not be the thing at all—quite out of the question, as your own good sense must tell you. In the first place, you ought to stay with your mother; in the next, and that is still more decisive, I don't know Moray sufficiently well to take a liberty with him. Those Highland houses are always filled for the

Twelfth, and you may rely upon it that no rooms are going a-begging."

He felt immediately that if he meant to be firm, he had better have stuck to a flat refusal. By weakly giving reasons, he admitted the thing was not impracticable; and Miss Julia, seeing her way, immediately set herself to argue.

"Mamma is always glad I should amuse myself, and she is always perfectly happy at the Castle. Besides, I need only be away for a fortnight or three weeks at the most. As for not taking a liberty with Mr Moray, is it not rather rash to say anything of that when you know how he has been running after your society of late? Mr Venables has remarked it more than once, and said he never knew him so quickly taken by any one. As for his house being full, you have often told me that Highland mansions are made of india-rubber, and can always be made to stretch as the owner pleases. And I do think, between you and me, papa, I should be rather an acquisition than an encumbrance to the shooting-party—especially if the weather were wet."

Winstanley looked at her, and

could not honestly deny it. He hesitated, and his daughter saw he was lost. She was a lively travelling companion, and gave little trouble. If he chose to go on to Skye or anywhere else, he could always send her south and remain *en garçon*. He might possibly add to his pleasure; she could not seriously interfere with his comfort; and that being the case, he was glad to gratify her. Prudence suggested no particular objections, looking at the matter from the match-making point of view, which the veteran speculator always kept vaguely before him. Jack Venables and the poet were both as good as engaged to their cousin, since both seemed to have set their hearts upon winning her. For Leslie made little concealment of the hopes which Jack had avowed. And neither of the other young men who made up the party could be called detrimentals, if the worst came to the worst. Miss Winstanley kissed him, when he promised "to see what could be done;" but was only moderately grateful. Not that she did not consider the visit as good as arranged; but, as her habit was, she had read what was passing in his mind, and surmised how far selfish considerations had weighed with him. Perhaps she overrated these and undervalued his affection; but if it were so, the fault was very much his own. He went on to say, somewhat dolefully—

"But there are always the two difficulties to be got over. There is the indiscretion of seeming to force you on Moray—and his daughter; he has never hinted at a wish to receive any ladies. And what is more serious, though less embarrassing, there is the certainty of a battle-royal with your mother."

Had Miss Winstanley spoken out frankly, she might have said that

she ought to be hardened to those single combats with her mother by this time. What she did say was, "Oh, I undertake to settle it all with mamma, so you need have no sort of annoyance. As for the Morays, I am sure nobody knows better than you how to turn an apparent indiscretion into a compliment. So far as Grace is concerned, we have always got on so well that I believe she may rather like having me on my own account. Besides, you should know enough of us girls by this time to be sure that she will be grateful to any one who can relieve her of superfluous lovers, and leave her to make herself quietly happy in her own way."

Whatever may have passed between Miss Winstanley and her mother, apparently she had not overestimated her influence. And Moray's hospitable nature would have left him powerless to refuse her visit, even had he not thought she would be a pleasant companion for Grace. Rather than refuse, indeed, he would have had a booth or "bothy" knocked up for himself at the shortest notice, where he would have slept on a camp-bed or a mattress of heather-shoots. Grace merely lifted her eyebrows slightly when she heard of the proposal. She liked Miss Winstanley well enough, but she rather resented a liberty she traced to the young lady. And, rightly or wrongly, she suspected a motive in it,—not that she was jealous—certainly not.

I have said that June in itself is the most delightfully exhilarating of all months in the Highlands; but there is no denying the superior excitement of the opening days of the grouse-shooting. The days are still long: the daybreaks and the sunsets are

glorious; the chances should be in favour of settled weather; and the great work of the week is apparent in the minds of everybody. Of course I do not speak of exceptional years, when the moors have been swept by the deadly grouse disease, leaving behind it a solitude strewn with skeletons, or only enlivened by the cynical crowing of some tough, seasoned old cocks, apparently as proof to the pestilence as they are shy of the guns. Nor do I know that the first of the season is specially enjoyable to gentlemen who live all the year round in the North. They go to work with intense earnestness no doubt, despatching their business with deceptive airs of satisfaction. But after all, the sport comes to them in the routine of regular tasks: they range from trout and salmon fishing through June, deer and many sorts of miscellaneous shooting; and it is for a very few weeks in the year at the outside that they have to resign themselves to the trial of killing nothing whatever. There may be exceptions, of course; but as a rule I suspect they have little more appreciation of the romantic than the Abyssinian savage who hunts the upper tributaries of the Blue Nile, or the ferryman who plies for fares beneath the Rapids of Niagara. Now it is another thing altogether with the men who get the key of the forests and the moors after a long-drawn season in London. If they be not utterly *blasé* or broken down, they feel like so many schoolboys let loose for the holidays. For a time at least the spirit rises superior to the flesh, and though it be but a flash in the pan, they hold their own upon the hills with the hillmen. But if that be the case with the men, it is far more so with the ladies, unless, indeed, they be

thoroughbred Cockneys. The life of a woman in London is as artificial as the fashions in her dress. As she compresses herself in tight-fitting garments, fantastically cut to disfigure her shape, and to balk her in all her natural movements, so she is condemned to breathe the most objectionable air; while she can never stir abroad without an escort. She takes her evening recreation in overheated dining-rooms, heavily laden with those smells of the cookery which are by no means disagreeable in moderation,—or in reception-rooms which are something between a Russian bath and a smelting-furnace. Nor does she gain much by opening the windows at home, beyond inhaling the odours of gutters or gas-lamps, or of the back-smoke that has been filtered through unswept chimneys, and impregnated by the refuse of the mews behind. Yet she holds on to the day of her release, in a stern sense of self-sacrificing duty; and it shows that we have our everyday martyrs among us, who should rank with the virgin legions of the Saint Ursulas. If she is a matron, she is bound to see her daughters married; if she is a maiden, she is bent on getting married herself; if she be neither one nor the other, but a spinster soured by disappointments, she is nevertheless bound, in obedience to the instincts of her sex, to immolate herself to the society which shrinks from her as an incubus. But though the strong sense of duty may carry her along, a delicious reaction will come with the release. For a day or two, at all events, it would be a delightful change from West London to the dullness of any picturesque farmhouse in the country. And when she is transported to the grandest scenery in the islands, and let down easily by residence in a comfortable coun-

try-house, with pleasant company and all desirable luxuries, then for a few weeks the emancipated female is in Paradise. *Ennui* will come later: in the meantime she is sceptical or agnostical about it. Meantime it is rapture to go and to come, without ordering the carriage an hour or two before, or summoning a servant as protector. It is rapture to count on an appetite at dinner, notwithstanding reckless indulgence at a five o'clock tea, over sweet cakes and all manner of abominations; for nineteen-twentieths of women are *gourmandes*, though unintelligent *gourmandes*. It is rapture to stroll out to mark the sunsets, when the western horizon is glowing in golden lights, and each fleecy cloud in its lustrous beauty reflects poetical inspiration from the showers of sparks flying back from the receding wheels of the sun-god's chariot. And it is most rapturous and invigorating of all, to breathe the freshness of the morning through open windows; revelling in unwonted lightness of spirits in the sights and sounds of the mountain solitudes. Then, for the time at least, we are lifted out of ourselves; the temptations of our everyday life are left behind us; and the thoughts of young men and maidens in particular, will turn lightly and easily to dreams of love.

In that particular August the Highland weather was almost perfect. There was pretty nearly constant sunshine, yet the temperature was cooled by the breezes and the light-flying showers. So that a drift of fleecy clouds from time to time would break the monotony of the deep azure of the heavens; and though the glass stood encouragingly above set fair, each morning the hills, the lakes, and the valleys were draped in fantastic wreaths of vapour. The

fine-weather haze made a fire agreeable, when the peat sparked through the crackling oak-logs, and then it extinguished itself naturally in the sun-rays that beat hotly after breakfast on the gravel before the house. The party was in good humour with itself and all the world; and the guests must have been the most fastidious of mortals had they not felt thoroughly contented. Allowances made for somewhat cramped accommodation, they were surrounded with every conceivable luxury. Even Calverley Baker, a born sybarite, whose brand-new palatial villa near Cardiff was renowned far and near as a marvel of sumptuous fitting up, gave unqualified praise to the comforts of his old-fashioned bedroom, where lounging-chairs covered with light-coloured cretonnes contrasted pleasantly with the low ceiling and the quaintly antiquated cupboards. It was admitted on all hands that the ingenious *chef* surpassed himself, though sorely tried by unpunctuality at meals. And after dinner, with the windows thrown open to the night, the conversation circulated as briskly as the Château Lafitte, to be followed by music and flirtations when the gentlemen joined the ladies, with a rubber at whist for those who liked it. Then in that easy life the austerity of the *convenances* might be safely disregarded. There were strolls in the moonlight along the shores of the loch, when Venables or Leslie—even Mr Baker or the M'Claverty—had opportunities, if they chose, of becoming sentimental. In fact, ladies and gentlemen were on so pleasant a footing, that the latter at least were loath to separate; and, except upon the great day of the Twelfth, sport became rather a recreation than a business. Even Battersby, who, being elderly,

was supposed to be unimpressible, was so far subjugated that he submitted with a good grace to be overruled, when he had murmured some protests against this heterodoxy. In fact, when he had tried to make a feeble stand, Jack Venables had been down upon him with that pleasant manner which deprecated resistance and gave no offence.

"Why make a toil of a pleasure, my dear General? Your intelligence may be clouded a little by the prejudices of habit; but to a man of your gallantry, it must surely seem absurd to refuse the goods the gods provide you. You can shoot every year with Jack, Tom, or Harry—hardened bachelors like myself, who simply make a business of butchery. But it is not more than once or so in a lifetime that you have the chance of strewing the game-panniers with summer flowers, and wreathing the gun-barrels in roses. If we do ruffle Donald's shaggy eyebrows by altering the beats—if we do waste an extra half-hour or so after luncheon—what does it matter? My motto when out holiday-making is, *Vive la bagatelle!* and I vote for the ladies joining us again to-morrow."

They were discussing their plans in the smoking-room, where neither of the fathers chanced to be present, so they might chat all the more freely. After Jack's persuasive apostrophe, the General looked around him and over his shoulder, but could see no supports coming up. On the contrary, both the M'Claverty and Mr Baker approved Jack's arguments by eloquent silence; while Leslie, as we know, had no personal interest in the subject, since he only took to the hill as an amateur and an onlooker. It was not to be expected that he should advocate misogyny under the circumstances.

So the General, having delivered his conscience, shrugged his shoulders, and laughed.

"If I were Glenconan now, or Winstanley either, for that matter, I should distrust you hardened bachelors, Mr Venables. However, I suppose there is no help for it; there should be safety for the young ladies in company, and you can't do much harm on the open hill. Thank heaven, I never had a daughter!" he added, in a tone of such emphatic gratitude that, while the rest of the smoking-party burst out laughing, it brought something like a blush to Mr Venables's cheek. Seeing that the stray shaft seemed to have gone home, and thinking himself that Mr Venables's matrimonial schemes could be no affair of his, the General changed the subject.

"By the way, where are our worthy host and Winstanley? I suppose they are talking China, as usual, over their cheroots. Well, birds of a feather will flock together; but it appears to me they are getting abominably unsociable of an evening—a charge which no one can bring against any of you young gentlemen. I thought I should never have got you away from the piano to-night."

Winstanley and Moray were pacing the gravel together out of doors. The former, though he pulled his cloak closer about him, was setting the night air and chances of rheumatism at defiance; while the latter, in evening dress, with unbuttoned waistcoat, drew in the health of his native hills voluptuously, with all the force of his powerful lungs. He looked the picture of robust health and perfect human contentment. Winstanley, glancing at him, thought as much, and envied him. He said so, too, with a laugh, in which there was some slight touch of bit-

terness; and then proceeded, half-musing aloud, to draw a contrast between himself and his companion, considerably to his own disadvantage. Moray did not take up the challenge, as the other had perhaps meant he should. At that moment he felt at perfect peace with himself, with his conscience, and with all the world. If life after middle age is not very much a question of livers and blue pills, at all events we view it very differently under different circumstances. In the exhilaration of the change from Eaton Place to the Glen; with the bracing that had come to him from hard walking and good shooting; in the happiness of seeing his daughter blooming and bright, and his guests in the best of spirits about him,—Moray had cast his worries to the winds, and reconciled himself to his prosperity. Even the presence of Leslie, with the recollections it evoked, had ceased for some days past to bring any reproach to him. So he answered Winstanley lightly enough.

"I know no one who need less envy me than you; yet, on my word, I have good cause to be grateful. In fact, to-night I feel almost heathenish, as if I should either offer a propitiatory sacrifice to the fates; or pray, like the tyrant of Samos, for some small piece of misfortune to trouble my prosperity."

"Please don't talk like that, my good fellow," said the other. "Though I am neither romantic nor yet superstitious, you positively make me shudder. Misfortunes come soon enough and without praying for, you may take your oath of that; and in the meantime, with your health and your money, and all the rest, you may be content to take the good the gods provide you. But *apropos* to praying for breaks in prosperity,

it strikes me that the clouds are banking up for a storm. And another thing strikes me, and that is, a chill in the air coming down the valley. At any rate, I accept it as a warning that it is high time to go indoors."

There are changes in the mountain weather that come up mysteriously as they pass quickly,—changes that go by almost unnoted by the weather-glass. Moray drew his curtains to look out before going to bed, and could hardly have known the summer night for the same that had been beaming on him barely an hour before from its myriads of twinkling stars. The moon was still visible in her pale radiance, but the upper edge of the disc was cut straight across and blotted out by the black line of a swiftly descending cloud-belt. Three-fourths of the sleeping loch was still shimmering in a sheet of silver, that seemed slowly to rise and fall in the moonlight, with the peaceful respiration of a tranquil sleeper. Yet even as he looked, he was reminded of the Eastern myth, as he saw the silver swiftly swallowed up by the storm-demon of the darkness. One moment, each gnarled and stunted tree or each patch of heather that clung to the steep escarpments of the opposite mountain-walls, stood out as if in the glare of some great electric light, slightly toned down and mellowed by the distance. The next, the cliffs themselves had faded into spectral shadows, which vanished in their turn into outer darkness with the total eclipse of the moon behind the clouds. It was a depressing sight, and he shuddered involuntarily as the breath of the night air came in colder puffs. He was ashamed of what he characterised as his morbid susceptibilities: he blew out the candles and stepped into bed. But

sleep refused to come at his call : he tossed and turned ; he threw off the clothes ; he went off into feverish dreams, and woke from them more feverish and restless. And he gladly welcomed the first grey glimmerings of the dawn, as the short summer night gave place to the life of morning. When he rose and looked out again, the storm had passed over ; it must have discharged itself far away to the south, as he could hear by the mutterings of distant thunder-peals. At Glenconan, though the ground seemed to smoke with the lifting mists of the dawn, the sky and atmosphere were clear as before. Moray's romance seldom prompted him to eccentricities. But for once in his life he felt disposed to a very early promenade, and he excused himself by the prospect of a plunge in the loch.

"A walk will do me all the good in the world," he said to himself. "It will shake off those absurd phantasmagoria that have beset me. Everybody in the house is asleep ; nobody need be a bit the wiser." So, like a burglar devising his stealthy arrangements from the inside, he softly slid up the casement to its greatest width, passed his bulky person with some difficulty through the opening, and stepped gently on to the roof of the verandah that ran under the window. "If I have to enter again by escalade," he thought, "I can always find a ladder." And from the gently sloping roof of the verandah, he lowered himself down upon the grass with unwonted agility.

The prescription of air and exercise worked wonderfully. He felt decidedly better with the expansion of his lungs, as he sculled a boat across the loch to the isle of the heronry. He was almost himself again, as he set foot on the

strip of silvery shingle, and dragged up his boat half high and dry. As yet there was nothing like actual sunshine, though he could see the first faint reflections of the day already glimmering behind the distant peaks to the eastward. The aspect of everything about him was vague and mysterious. The rising fogs hanging about the birchen and alder copses took all manner of fantastic forms. A dozen times he could have imagined that the phantom of the martyred saint was dogging his steps or eluding his advance. The black tops of the Scotch firs, standing out like an archipelago of dark islands from the sea of billowy vapours, seemed appropriate places of habitation for the spectral-like herons, who occasionally flitted from amongst the boughs, and silently melted out of sight. But on the other hand, all such unwholesome fancies were cheerily dissipated by the merry concert of the birds who are silent through an August day. And as his spirits rose to the notes of thrush and blackbird, he stripped his clothes above a convenient block of projecting rock, and took a header into the deep cold water. The shock completed what the birds had commenced. Moray was a magnificent swimmer. The art a Highland education had begun, had been practised in the tepid Eastern seas, where you live in the water when you can, to escape from the furnaces of the land. Swimming low at first, as he got braced by the cool waves and exhilarated by the sense of rapid motion, he gradually raised head and shoulders at each stroke, cleaving the water in showers of spray, and leaving the long trail of the bubbles breaking behind him. Herons floated up from their fishing stations in the shallows ; teals and ducks rose quacking from their

feeding-grounds in the sedges; and no doubt there was unwonted commotion among the finny inhabitants of the usually peaceful pools. But if Moray scared the animal creation, his own calm was restored; and when he had rubbed himself down and slipped back into his garments, like Martin Chuzzlewit after gulping the sherry-cobbler, he was another man in every essential particular. Rowing homewards, and regaining the house in a glow, he could laugh at all his superstitious forebodings; and when he came down to the breakfast-table after an hour or two in the sheets, his daughter remarked on his rosy appearance, and all went merry as marriage-bells till the luncheon-hour.

"We have had a delightful morning—Julia and I," she exclaimed, as the first of the shooting-parties arrived at the well, at which the young ladies were awaiting the guns.

"So have we," her father rejoined, speaking confidently for his companions, "although possibly the sport might have been better. But it is a perfect day for shooting; and, considering the breakfast I made, I never in my life felt more ready for lunch. I vote we give the other loitering gentlemen no law; so you had better let us see what you have got for us."

As he spoke, the stalking-hats of the other gentlemen were seen rising above the sky-line of the nearest hill; and very soon they all lay reclining in the fashion of the Greeks and Romans around an exceedingly tempting repast. It would have made a pretty picture for a Scottish Watteau; and we may safely say that at none of the meetings in the 'Decameron' did the minutes ever go by more gaily. All the more so that there was no story-telling, and that the

chatter to the symphony of knives and forks was lively rather than witty. Little did Moray or his daughter think that it was but the treacherous lull before a terrible storm—that they were already in the shadow of a lasting sorrow, and that the messenger of evil was approaching on the legs of a Highland laddie.

"Now, what may Master Colin want?" queried Jack Venables, as he marked a sturdy Highland boy jump the little burn below, and come bounding up the bank in their direction.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Moray, carelessly. "Possibly Walker may have sent him after us with something he forgot to pack in the hampers."

"No bad news, I hope," exclaimed Grace, with something like a presentiment.

"Bad news! nonsense," returned Moray, the more confidently that his daughter's remark recalled his forebodings of the night. "He has brought a handful of newspapers, I see. Perhaps it was a thoughtful attention of Walker's, as he knew we were lunching near the house. All the same, he ought to have remembered that I hate being bothered with politics on the hill."

"Well, in another minute or so we shall know all about it," said Jack. "Meantime, Grace, I will trouble you for the half of that grouse."

"It was a telegram just come for Mr Venables," said the boy, "and Mr Walker had thought that as I was to carry that whatever, I had better bring the papers at the same time."

Jack tore open the telegram. "I only trust it is not an order of recall from his lordship." But as he read, his face lightened up. He read it again to make sure of the contents, and then threw it

across to Winstanley. That gentleman perused the despatch in turn, and glanced at his young *protégé* significantly—

"It need be no secret between us, need it? Suppose you give me the genuine pleasure of contributing to the gaiety of the company."

"By all means," rejoined Jack, brimming over with good-humour; "I presume the contents must be all right, and I can have no reason to make a mystery of them."

"By all means, then, papa," echoed Miss Winstanley, merrily. "Here are Grace and myself on the tenter-hooks of expectation, and Mr Venables permits you to gratify our laudable curiosity."

Mr Winstanley smiled, with a complacent satisfaction that attributed some of the credit of the coming disclosure to himself. Then looking round and seeing he had the ears of the party, he went on with a certain formality of manner, which showed the importance he attached to the communication.

"It is only another agreeable surprise in the marvellously successful career of our friend. Some months ago, Jack there consulted me as to venturing a trifle in an American mine. In the course of his peregrinations in the metropolis, he had picked up an acquaintance in the smoking-room of the Langham Hotel. What was his name, Jack? No wonder I forget it."

"Rufus P. J. George Washington Hicks!"

"Well, Rufus P. J. George Washington Hicks had had strange experiences between the Sierra Nevada and the Golden Gates. He had run a liquor-bar; he had traded in buffalo-robcs; he had sunk his savings in building-lots, and seen them swallowed by a fire, when he had backed his luck by refusing to insure. He had feasted on porter-steaks, and canvas-backs, and champagne: he had been grate-

ful for crusts picked up in the gutter. Finally, he had come rather to the front again, when he tried his hand at cradle-washing and quartz-mining. He got a concession for a silver claim somewhere in Idaho; and the lodes were so promising, though ground had barely been broken, that before going further he took a trip to the old country, determined on having a good time of it. Whether he had a good time or not, I don't know; but it would appear that his transatlantic trip has been a godsend for Venables. He cottoned to our friend, or froze to him, as he repeatedly assured him; and at last, in a moment of expansion after midnight, made him a serious offer. For a trifle that was not a spot on the real value, as he said, Jack might speculate in a quarter of his chances. What were the terms, Jack, I really forget?"

"Eight thousand dollars down," rejoined Jack, promptly. He had got tired of Winstanley's prolixity, for he saw that Baker was yawning, while the M'Claverty had sunk back in the heather in a state of semi-somnolence. "Eight thousand dollars down, and it was all a question of the mountain-man's honesty. The mine might be solid metal or 'wild cat,' and the American only too well aware of its worthlessness. So one day I drove him down to dinner at Greenwich. Mr Winstanley kindly consented to meet him. He pronounced, on the whole, in favour of Hicks's honesty, and encouraged me to stake my dollars on the chance."

"And to-day," chimed in Winstanley, triumphantly, "we have a telegram, which tells us that Hicks is waiting to sell half the interest in the Tombstone Lode to a professional promoter for half a million of dollars paid on the nail;

the balance for the remaining half to be represented by shares in a company."

"I can't quite follow what your American friend would call the calculations," exclaimed Grace, with cousinly excitement. "But from what I can gather, this mine alone has made Jack a man of considerable property."

"Exactly so, Miss Moray," Winstanley replied. "Roughly speaking, the quarter of half a million of dollars is £25,000 sterling; and his reserved interest in shares, if the promoters have kept their eyes open, may represent unlimited possibilities of wealth. Can Hicks carry out the bargain without your consent, Jack?"

"Really, I hardly know how that is. You see I never dreamed of his doing any business of the kind till he got back again to his own side of the Atlantic. Those promoters he speaks of must have thought it worth while to follow him to England on purpose to trade."

"In any case, if you take my advice again, you will lose not a moment in answering his despatch. There are always slips between the cup and the lip, and it should be the object of every wise man to minimise them. Jump on one of these shooting-ponies, if Glenconan will give you leave, and make tracks straight away across the moors for the post-office."

Jack jumped at the suggestion, and on to the pack-saddle, which had been adjusted to sling a pair of panniers. He rode off in a running fire of congratulations, which rang pleasantly in the ears of the fortunate youth. Before he swung himself on to the pony he had sought Grace's eye. It may have been that at that moment he saw everything in rosy colours, but he certainly did fancy that what he read there meant more than mere

cousinly sympathy. Then he looked at Julia Winstanley, who may have resented being placed second in order of precedence. For she took such unnatural pains to avoid meeting his glance, that he might have had every reason to feel pleasantly flattered had he been unconscientious enough to keep a couple of strings to his bow. As it was, to tell the honest truth, he gave little thought, except incidentally, to either of the young women. His mind was far too full, in the meantime, of the piece of marvellous luck that had befallen him.

"Already," so ran his thoughts, "with that money paid down, I should have very much more than an easy income. Without being anyways imprudent, I might try another short cut uphill, and enter for the parliamentary stakes to-morrow. Nor is there any possible reason why I should not marry money in the person of Miss Grace. But prudence says that it is better to wait a twelvemonth, and see what comes of the paid-up shares. It may be another case of a Great Comstock Lode, and I may be rolling up my millions like a Mr Mackay—which reminds me that I ought to make assurance sure, and send the answer so that it may reach the City during business hours."

And never did the steady-going animal he bestrode have such a bucketing, before or since. Jack rode without stirrups, and carried nothing in the shape of stick or spur. But he pressed his heels against Donald's shaggy flanks; he tugged provocatively at Donald's iron jaws; he cheered the animal on with whoop and halloo; and unconsciously, as he worked up a shambling gallop over a downhill stretch of turf, he would break into a snatch of song, to be cut short by a spasm of anxiety.

When they pulled up before the straw-thatched post-office, Donald was dripping with sweat; while his rider was hardly in better case, what with his state of mental excitement, and what with his bodily exertion in the heat. Already

Jack was labouring beneath the burden of his riches, being anxious as to the timely despatch of the telegram; and might have realised the wisdom of the petition in the Litany, which prays for deliverance in all time of our wealth.

CHAPTER XIX.— ——— AND BAD.

The intelligent reader must have remarked—sensational leaders in the newspapers are always drawing attention to the fact—that sensations seldom come singly. A railway smash seems to transmit similar shocks through sundry systems in the kingdoms; one portentous mining disaster is invariably followed by others; and wars are pregnant with wars, as pestilences breed similar calamities. So it is in private life, where one surprise is pretty sure to succeed to another—though the surprises may be of opposite colours and characters, alternating like the streaks of fat and lean in a prime flitch of bacon. Moray had welcomed the news of his nephew's good fortune with double pleasure, that they seemed to upset all his ominous forebodings. The signs of the preceding night had been significant; but, through disorder of the digestion or some similar cause, he had been persuaded to read them all wrong. They had heralded a sufficiently exciting event by way of seasoning to a Highland shooting luncheon; but personally it could not affect him in any way, unless indirectly and pleasantly through the future of his daughter. Matrimonially, Master Jack's prospects were looking up, and consequently Leslie's were proportionately depressed. Accordingly he glanced across to Leslie, to see what the poet was thinking of the situation. Though he knew well enough his elder nephew's

generosity of disposition, he was prepared to see him grave and pre-occupied, but the reality went far beyond his anticipations. Leslie's brow was knitted in gloomy thought, as his eye was riveted on the newspaper he held in his hand. "He takes it more deeply to heart than I had fancied," Moray thought to himself, "and very likely is vexing himself quite unnecessarily. I greatly doubt whether Grace has ever cared for Jack; and most assuredly, were she a pauper, she is not the girl to be influenced by his sudden acquisition of wealth. If she really liked him, it would be a different thing, for now he might justifiably make regular proposals. *Nous verrons.*"

However, in his delicacy and consideration, he thought it better to suggest a move. "Time's up, gentlemen," he exclaimed, setting the example and getting up himself; "you must tear yourselves away from your heather couches and tobacco."

General Battersby and Calverley Baker were his own companions. Leslie, who did not carry a gun, was in the habit of attaching himself indifferently to either party. On this occasion he elected to go with his uncle, following at his heels like his shadow, though like a ghost he had nothing to say, and seemed to wait to be spoken to. His silence struck Moray all the more, that it appeared almost incumbent on him to say something as to Venables's piece of good for-

tune. In the growing sense of embarrassment, Moray went off his shooting. And when, after missing two or three fair chances in succession, he muffed a singularly easy right and left, Donald Ross could not refrain from a guttural ejaculation. "Did any mortal ever see the like of that! If I had not filled Glenconan's cartridges myself, I would say that one of the gillies had forgotten to put in the lead!"

The laird, listening, caught a "sough" of the sound, and waxed wrathful; yet he had the justice to vent his wrath upon Leslie, and not on the innocent keeper.

"Confound you, Ralph! I believe you are casting the evil eye on my gun-barrels. The powder in the morning was straight enough; and now if an ostrich were to get on the wing, I believe I should shoot below him. If you *would* only say something and break the spell."

As he spoke, Ralph was almost at his elbow, and he answered the invocation with impressive solemnity. "I have been waiting to speak to you, sir,—" and then he hesitated. "Heaven knows I would gladly forbear, even now, were it possible."

Moray shrugged his shoulders involuntarily, as he thought to himself, "How terribly in earnest he takes it, poor fellow! and here I am let in for a bad quarter of an hour, and probably the rest of the day's shooting will be spoilt."

Then immediately, kind-heartedness got the better of selfishness, and he answered in a tone that was sympathetic and soothing—

"I might scold you, my good fellow, for hesitating with me. I might surely say, if you will only remember the past, that you are bound to give me confidence for confidence. More especially if what you are brooding over in any way concerns me. But since

you have said so much, you must continue. You know nothing pleases me so much as straightforwardness. And," he added, smilingly, "I don't mind if I give you a lead. Am I right in thinking that Grace has something to do with it?"

"Quite right, sir, and I am grieved to say it; but I fear not at all in the way you imagine."

At the notion of being trifled with over any trouble threatening Grace, her father's bristles got up at once; and it was as the quick-tempered fiery Celt that he turned sharply on his nephew—

"If I love frankness, I detest riddles, Master Ralph. If you have anything unpleasant to tell, will you have the goodness to tell it quickly?"

"Bad news is always bad to break," said Ralph, slowly. "But neither of us are men to knock under to misfortune. Yet when you know all, you will admit that I might well shrink from the task. Nay, don't get impatient. The Southern Counties Bank is in extreme difficulties; already it is more than probable that it has closed its doors."

"Good heavens! you don't say so. How many shares has your mother got in it?—twenty or thereabouts, is it not?"

"Twenty. Yes."

"With unlimited liability. What a terrible misfortune! I never could have foreseen anything like this, though you know that as one of her trustees I was strongly in favour of selling; and if old George Leslie had not been another, sold most certainly the shares would have been. But he was supine and ailing, and slow to do anything, and I own I never looked for anything worse than fluctuations."

"You acted for the best, and need not reproach yourself, sir.

But read that," and Leslie pulled the 'Scotsman' out of his pocket, and handed it over to his uncle. "It seems there were ugly rumours afloat, but I have hardly looked at the papers for the last day or two. Not that we could have done anything in time. My uncle George is at Kissingen, and in no condition to transact business."

Moray hardly listened. He was devouring the 'Scotsman's' money article. The rumours of the previous day or two, following just on the collapse of one or two great firms of ironmasters and ship-builders, some of whose partners were either on the Board of Direction or closely connected with it, had been quickly followed by a panic and a run. Other houses of equal importance were said to be compromised or involved. Should they come down in turn, as was hourly expected, the bank must fail to face its liabilities. It was insinuated that for four-and-twenty hours the shares had been artificially bolstered by money found by the Board. The bolstering, if it were a fact, had failed of its purpose; now in the reaction, the relapse in the shares had been tremendous; and when the writer penned the article, they were practically unsaleable. In another corner of the paper, a paragraph announced, on good authority, that the other Scottish banks, after protracted deliberations, had been unable to see their way to tiding the "Southern" through its difficulties.

"Which, if it be true—and true it probably is—is necessarily the bank's death-warrant," sighed Leslie.

Moray nodded a gloomy assent. "But after all," he said, in another moment, "matters might have been very much worse. Your mother will always have her jointure from Roodholm—£400, is it

not? I don't imagine the creditors can touch that; nor is she in any way bound to sacrifice it. She loses her Southern Counties shares—say, round numbers, £5000. The rest of her trust funds must be given up—say, again in round numbers, as much more. Well, to say nothing of being her brother and rich, as a negligent trustee, I am really responsible. When she has got a full discharge, I start her fair again; I pay her over the £10,000, and never miss it. My dear boy, after all, we are making a mountain of a molehill; consider that settled, and let me go back to my shooting, unless you mean to make Donald your enemy for life."

But Leslie laid a hand gently on his shoulder. "God knows, my dearest uncle, how grieved I am; but I fear you fail to realise the situation. If the leading article in the 'Scotsman' be reliable, the liabilities of this most unlucky concern will be enormous."

"Very probably, my dear fellow, and very sorry I am for the shareholders; but how need that affect your mother? She gives up her property: I make it good to her; and so far as she is concerned, the whole will pass like an ugly dream, and the worst she can suffer will be a few days' anxiety."

"Would to God that were the worst, sir! But you—you are a trustee."

"Well, and what then?"

"Why, surely you must know, or you ought to have been informed, that in such a case as this the personal property of the trustees is held liable to the uttermost farthing. My uncle George has nothing, or next to nothing, and I dread to think what the calls may be."

Moray let fall the butt of his gun as if he were grounding arms, and his jaw dropped at the same time. He passed his hot hand

across his brow, from which the cold beads of perspiration were oozing already. But to do him bare justice, he was only thinking of Grace—not of himself, or even of Glenconan.

Ralph had nothing to say at the moment—no comfort to give. But he felt pangs of shame and bitter self-reproach as he remembered that his uncle would willingly have got rid of these shares, and would have done so had it not been for his mother's fatal obstinacy—for Mrs Leslie liked good interest as well as most people. "Had I given my thoughts to practical business like Jack Venables—had I not gone dreaming away existence like a moon-struck idiot—nothing of this need ever have happened. I ought to have used my influence with my mother, and seen that her trustees were made safe."

Almost unconsciously he moaned out the reflection aloud; and Moray heard it, and it awoke him from his stupor.

"Not a bit of it, Ralph; I say to you what you said to me a few moments ago, that you have no cause to reproach yourself. The business was mine, and mine alone, for we know that your uncle George was but a dummy. Any interference of yours would have been unwarrantable, and of course we should have resented it. No, no; happen what will, always remember you have nothing to blame yourself for."

"It is generous of you to say so, sir; and to forget your own troubles in trying to relieve mine. But your generosity cannot alter the state of the case, nor affect any reparation it is in my power to make."

The first shock over, with its terrible suddenness, Moray was not a man to be prostrated. Though he might quiver like the

oak to the first burst of the hurricane, he was not a man either to bend or break. Though wind and tide had for the most part been in his favour, he had nevertheless battled with the world as a mere lad, and had always quietly prided himself on indomitable courage and the prompt resolutions that were not to be shaken. Nor did his natural strength of mind or the habits of a lifetime fail him in this extremity. It was characteristic that as he walked mechanically onwards, while his mind was full of Grace and her fortunes, already he was vaguely devising means of parrying or retrieving the calamity that threatened them. "Could I only see her safe, could I only, were it possible, keep Glenconan for her, even at the cost of heavy mortgages, I would think little myself of going back to the East, and betaking myself to the enterprises I used to love so well. I am strong as ever I was, though a little stiffer." And he stretched the iron muscles of his arms, and expanded the breadth of his burly chest. "If Grace were but happily married, I might go with an easy mind, though it would be hard to turn my back on her again." And as he thought of Grace being married, he glanced naturally at Leslie, who was stalking by his side in sad abstraction. Leslie, he knew, would welcome such a match; but he was not quite so sure of his favourite, Jack Venables.

Then came a distraction which did him good. As the laird, usually so keen, seemed to have cast all thought of the shooting behind him, Donald Ross became ireful, and then anxious. The dogs ranged unobserved, and "drew" through the heather unnoticed. Don had dropped to a steady point: Flora, the most graceful of Gordon setters, had backed him in an attitude of statuesque sublimity: the laird had

walked past unheeding: the birds had skimmed away unharmed. Donald's mind was made up that he must be in the presence of some strange misfortune, and to relieve his mind, he swore at Don; then stooped and patted him kindly on the head. Whereupon that sagacious animal looked as puzzled as the old keeper. Thenceforward Donald set himself to watch his master, as keenly as one of his terriers would have watched an otter's hole. From his place behind he could see little of Glenconan's face, but he studied his gestures, and the set of his shoulders. The signs were plain as print to him, and his worst suspicions were confirmed. The faithful old fellow would have given a year's wages to know the best or the worst of it at once. But his native refinement reminded him that attention, however well meant, could hardly fail to be offensive, so he fell back several paces further in the rear, by that manœuvre keeping the gillie behind him. Secure from observation, as he thought, his rugged features showed the intensity of his sympathy; and, like Leslie, he went walking in silent meditation, lifting his eyes occasionally from the ground to take another survey of his master.

On one of these occasions Moray chanced to turn round. He was taking a fond look down the strath that might soon be lost to him for ever, and the eyes of the master and the follower met. Donald's weather-beaten face coloured up like a girl's, and he felt painfully guilty. As to Moray, he understood it all; and the sympathy of his faithful old servant sent a warm glow to his heart. He had friends still—here was one of the staunchest of them—with health and strength. Surely he was not so much to be pitied after all: surely he might make a manful fight for

his daughter. He made Donald a sign, who came to his side in a moment. In gratitude, and something like actual love, he could have almost embraced the old keeper in foreign fashion: he would certainly have pressed his honest hand, had it not been for the watchful eyes of the gillie.

"It's like that you may have had some ill news, Glenconan; it would take a deal to make you give over the shooting in the very best of the day."

"You're right, Donald; I have had bad news, and in due time you shall know all about it. But it's nothing, as I hope, that may not be got over; and in the meantime, remember, not a word to Miss Grace."

"Deed, Glenconan, and you may trust me there. I would rather be crushed to death under the stones, like poor Angus, than bring one cloud across the sunshine of her bonnie face."

"I am quite sure of it; and now I must try to shoot a bit, or Hector, behind there, will be having queer fancies. It may be the last time," he added, involuntarily; and Donald groaned aloud as he heard the sad ejaculation.

"The Lord preserve me, Glenconan! don't say it's as bad as that;" and he threw so much of heart-felt melancholy into his droning pronunciation of the "bad," that, in other circumstances, it would have made his master smile. Now he merely shook his head in sad assent to what sounded like the dying wail of a funeral dirge on the bagpipes over the departing glories of the house of Moray.

"Bad as it may be, we must make the best of it, Donald; and happen what may, I shall never forget your kindness."

He felt strangely softened in his present mood. He had always been a good and a liberal master,

but now he thought he had never done half enough for dependants who had been born and brought up under the shadow of his ancient roof-tree. How he mourned internally over the wasted opportunities that might be gone from him never more to return!

These thoughts at least found no response in Donald's breast. He remembered, as indeed he might, the bright high-spirited boy he had taught to shoot and throw a fly; who had never forgotten him, even when exiled among outlandish savages; who had sent him home, by way of appropriate *souvenirs*, the heads and skins of the strange and outlandish beasts which garnished the walls of his little cottage, and were the wonder of the neighbours for forty miles round. A proud man Donald had been, when keepers and gillies made pilgrimages to see them, gaping in astonishment as they heard him descant on the wonderful exploits of this modern Nimrod. A far prouder man he had been, when the Nimrod would beat up his quarters, when he came back to Glenconan from the East on his periodical visits. Donald had adored the man who had been his ideal of a gentleman and a hero; though latterly he had set up a rival idol in the person of the laird's beautiful daughter. After all, though, the two were a duality of deity, distinct, no doubt, yet indivisible in his affections. They had always seemed to be removed far beyond the reach of any earthly calamities save age and death, which must come to everybody. Had any gay trifler played false with Miss Grace—had it been "the Duke" himself, or a son of the minister—Donald, though a pious man, and a regular church-goer, inasmuch as a mountain-walk of nine miles might permit, would have shot him with as little re-

morse as a hooded crow. Now, in so far as he knew, this unknown evil had been wrought by no enemy in particular. Notwithstanding, and without any spur of personal animosity, he was just as ready to lay down his life for his master or Miss Grace. And as the greater included the less, he longed to place his little property at their disposal; for Donald, who had a fair knowledge of life, never doubted that money was at the bottom of the mischief. I said that the greater included the less; yet possibly his money was more to him than his life. A hardy hillman, when his foot was on his native crags, he would have thought nothing of risking a slip into a bottomless abyss, or a shot from the gun of some daring night-poacher. That was always in the way of his business. But he was a prudent Scot as he was a daring mountaineer, and few men could more heartily appreciate the possession of riches superior to his station. Come what might,—age, illness, or crippled limbs,—he might live on his hardly saved means, nor be burden even to Glenconan. The thought had cheered his heart through many a toilsome walk, and many a lonely night-watch. So when he eagerly offered to give up all to the laird, casting the care even of an aged mother upon Providence, I need hardly say more for his self-sacrifice and devotion. And there was no mistaking that he made the offer as if he ardently desired it should be accepted. With a prompt decision worthy of his master, he assumed an air of insinuating diplomacy, sidling up to his ear and his elbow, so that even Mr Leslie should not hear a word.

"Would you be willing now to do me a great kindness, Glenconan? and you must allow, sir, it is not often that I have asked one."

"You may be very sure I will,

Donald, if it be in my power," answered his master, though more than suspecting what was coming, for the moment was indifferently chosen for asking ordinary favours.

"Well, Glenconan, it is just this. You and your father before you have done everything for me and mine; and if I have the snug bit shealing down the glen, and the bit money in the bank at Dingwall, it all comes of the kindness of the family. And if it was money you were needing—or Miss Grace either,"—here he sank his voice to a barely audible whisper,—“you will take what I have, whatever—will you not, now?” And to Donald the sum in the Dingwall bank seemed no inconsiderable fortune.

The laird almost laughed, though he was much more inclined to weep. He was as much of a gentleman as Donald, and nothing would have induced him to refuse outright. At the same time he promised and vowed to himself, that if ever the sunbeams should shine again on his side of the brae, Donald and the old mother should bask in their warmth. Now, neither the presence of the gillie nor the apprehension of his secret getting wind, prevented him from grasping Donald's horny palm in his own.

“We can talk about all that later, Donald, if you please. I must wait for the present till I see my way a bit. But be sure that there is not one of all my friends to whom I would apply for assistance sooner; meanwhile, and for the last time, not a word of all this to my daughter.”

Donald nodded intelligence; and withdrew in a state of intense glorification, which for the moment made him almost forgetful of his master's troubles. Glenconan had squeezed his hand, and turned towards him in adversity. Glenconan had as good as promised to take his money if he needed it. Glenconan, in short, had treated him more than ever as a friend; and Donald would have liked, as the assassin in the Border ballad, to be “hackit in pieces sma'” by way of showing his gratitude.

And the laird shot on for two or three hours like a man, though perhaps with something less than his usual skill as a marksman. If he had said little, he thought the more. But he did say to Leslie before they returned to the house—“It was not for nothing I had my forebodings of coming calamities last night, and I could almost believe they were sent me as a merciful warning.”

CHAPTER XX.—MORAY GOES THROUGH THE MILL.

To Leslie, who alone was the sharer in his secrets, Moray's behaviour that evening at the dinner-table, and in the dining-room afterwards, was nothing less than heroic. There was no bravado. He might have been somewhat paler than was his wont; in place of turning to the decanters for a filip, he drank far less than usual. But he did the honours with the ease of a hospitable Highlander; and the shrewdest of his several sharp-

sighted guests never suspected anything of his inward anguish. The long-protracted dinner was all the more trying that the unconscious Jack Venables, in the flush of his last piece of good fortune, was in the highest possible spirits, and made no attempt to suppress them. Why should he? They were all friends, and, as usual, nobody seemed to grudge him his luck. If any one appeared indifferent to it or jealous of it, it was

Leslie; and for him Mr Venables could make allowances. If Leslie's gloomy silence affected him in any way, it was chiefly because it reminded him of his deep obligation. "Against any one else," he thought, "I should make the running at once, and strike home with Grace and her father, while the iron is hot. But that placid kind of poetical fellow takes things so terribly to heart; and come what may of my own matrimonial prospects, in common gratitude I must not make him miserable for life. I must feel my own way before I do anything further; and after all, should Grace have the bad taste to prefer him, I must comfort myself as I may, and seek consolation elsewhere. She is an extremely bewitching girl, no doubt; but there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it," and so thinking, he looked critically towards Julia Winstanley, who, catching his eyes, averted her own. Jack remembered, too, that his cousin was an heiress; but at that moment his confidence in his own luck was so great that he was in even a less mercenary mood than usual, and he never much cared for money for its own sake. And so, under the influence of the Château Lafitte, he came to the comfortable conclusion that he might demonstrate his gratitude to Leslie with no extraordinary sacrifice: that he would be guided by circumstances without suffering himself to be crushed by them.

But if Jack was inclined to resent Ralph Leslie's apathy, he had no reason to complain of his uncle's want of interest. Moray braced himself to remember how he would have felt had the impending calamity not been announced to him. Then he would have made his nephew's stroke of success his own, and set himself to celebrate the occasion by promoting an unusual

gaiety. While Jack, with a modesty more or less unaffected, parried the compliments his uncle paid him on his sagacity, by carrying the war into the enemy's country. Having given Winstanley due credit for his advice once for all, he almost ridiculed Mr Moray for paying him any compliments.

"You seem inclined to put me in the place of Mr Pecksniff, who would have ascribed all the merit to the virtues of his system of education had his daughter picked up a purse in the street. This plum has dropped into my mouth because I happened to be sitting under the tree, and I chanced to be sitting there with my mouth wide open. With you now, as you very well know, it was altogether a different thing. You followed up a first success with stroke upon stroke, all of them being directly due to your courage, foresight, and determination. I don't mean to blow your trumpet at your own table; but if I appear to flatter you in speaking the simple truth, you ought to remember the provocation you have given me. Ralph, there, should consecrate a poem to your commercial exploits—perhaps, indeed, he is contemplating one, for he seems to be wrapt in silent meditation. Or, better still, you might give us an autobiography yourself, in the style of Daniel Defoe; if you were frankly circumstantial, its success should be assured. It might have a run with the rising generation like Robinson Crusoe, and ought assuredly to throw Smiles on 'Self-help' into the shade."

"Upon my word and honour I agree with you, Venables," chimed in Winstanley. "I never thought of our good host turning author; but now that you suggest it, I don't see why he should not. I daresay he may be as strong in literary talent as on other points—

at all events, he might take Mr Leslie into a literary partnership; and what with Glenconan's practical romance, and Mr Leslie's poetry, we should have such a volume as the world has seldom seen. What do *you* say to it, Miss Moray?"

Miss Moray laughed and entered into the spirit of the joke, if joke it was. But apparently she thought the suggestion worth serious attention, for she believed her father to be equal to anything, and longed that justice should be done to a noble life, which had had so little of the contamination of everyday trade about it.

Never in his life, perhaps—not even on that fatal afternoon—had Moray suffered so much as from those ill-timed compliments and his daughter's playfulness. He sat there tied to the stake, nor could he escape from it, while his favourite nephew held fire-brands to his epidermis, and his daughter with loving eyes and smiling lips blew the brands into a smouldering glow, and made his sufferings wellnigh intolerable. Those successes of his, to what did they all amount now, but the remorse and disappointments of a wasted life? To what had he devoted the strength and the powers of a lifetime, but to preparing for himself this crowning bitterness? His saddest presentiments had never foreshadowed anything so bad; and judging by the sharp measure meted out to him, his reproaching conscience had treated him only too leniently. Well, as he paid such a penalty, surely his faults would be purged; and at any rate there was some measure of consolation in that, were it not that the sins of the father were being visited upon the child, and that the unconscious innocent one opposite to him was to suffer with the guilty.

But the longest of all evenings must have an end; and even with sea-sickness in an Australian liner, or toothache in the trans-Continental express, we are reminded that time is not eternity. When the ladies had retired to bed and the gentlemen to the smoking-room, Moray excused himself—truly enough—on the score of some business, and made a sign to Ralph Leslie, which was acknowledged. Five minutes afterwards they were together in Moray's den.

"My things are packed, and perhaps you will kindly order the dog-cart to take me on to meet the train to-morrow morning," said Leslie.

"I supposed as much," returned his uncle, "and you are right to follow that telegram of yours to your mother immediately. She will need your presence and advice. Fortunately my sister is a woman of sense and spirit; and she keeps that small jointure, I suppose, under any circumstances?"

"I do not know how that may be," returned Leslie. "In the first place, the creditors may have a lien even upon a secured income; in the next place, if I know my mother at all, if she thinks sufferers have any moral claim on her, she will never stand upon legal technicalities."

"As to her legal rights, I can say nothing. But were she to make any sacrifice such as you suggest, it would be nothing less than Quixotic. That, at least, is my deliberate opinion; and you know, Ralph, whether I am likely to think lightly of conscientious scruples."

"Assuredly not; and, no doubt, your opinion would have great weight with my mother. However, till I have an interview with her lawyer, it is premature to discuss the point. I hope sincerely, for her sake, she may have a right to her jointure, and that she can stick to it without any searchings

of heart. Otherwise, it will be a black look-out for her, and I don't know who there is to help her."

Moray stared at Ralph in astonishment, which he did not seek to conceal. And, of course, Ralph understood him, and answered the look in a rather injured tone.

"Why, sir, you surely cannot possibly suppose that I mean to continue master of my little property? It is strictly entailed, as you are aware, but the rents are at my own disposal; and if your fortune must be engulfed in this miserable wreck, you cannot imagine that I am to save anything!"

"Indeed, my dear boy, I do think so; and you are not only justified in holding to your income, but bound to do so. If things are as bad as we fear, you cannot save me; for the value of your life-rent of Roodholm, even could you give a valid title to it, which I doubt, would be a mere drop in the bucket. So much for legality or expediency. As for morality, I say that the surrender would be more Quixotic than the case of your mother parting with her jointure. I may be beggared for a technicality, and hard it seems; but you tell me that the law is clear, so there is nothing for me but resignation. If you voluntarily handed over your skin to the flaying knives of the liquidators on a technicality, you would fly in the face of your family duties, and sin against all natural affection."

Leslie was struck by the argument, but not altogether persuaded. He sat silent, turning the question slowly in his mind, as was his custom. So Moray, in his anxiety to drive the argument home and clench it, tried the effect of an appeal from which he would otherwise have shrunk.

"You desire to ease your mind by involving yourself in our com-

mon misfortune; you don't want to float away on the raft of Roodholm, while Grace and I go down with Glenconan and all our personal property. I understand the feeling, and it does you honour. But it seems to me that if any one has a claim on you it is we, rather than the creditors of this most unlucky bank. You know I do not speak for myself; and my speaking at all commits me personally never to accept a single shilling from you. But I confess I should not be sorry to know that Grace as well as your mother had a friend, on whose purse and sympathy I could see her fall back in case of necessity, without any great sense of humiliation. There is not another man living to whom I would say as much; and remember that, after all, you are our nearest kinsman."

"If I could only play the Boaz to my cousin's Ruth," thought Ralph; but he was too generous to give expression to the thought in the circumstances. Though he would not commit himself on the spur of the moment, he was willing enough to be convinced by such considerations, and he intimated as much to his uncle, considerably to that gentleman's comfort. The next morning he started for the south, charged to make all possible inquiries at the fountain-head, and to sift the matter as far as possible to the bottom.

"Don't telegraph, whatever you do," said Moray, "unless in case of extreme necessity. Grace must know nothing of this, till we are assured of the extent of the calamity, and disclosure becomes inevitable. But write fully, and above all, frankly; my best hope now of an easy mind is to know the worst, that I may lose as little time as possible in setting about making the best of it."

DEER AND DEER-FORESTS.

THERE has been so much written lately on this subject, and it has been of such a one-sided character, that any excuse for the following few words seems hardly needed. The writer only wishes that some one more competent than himself had taken up the cudgels on behalf of the noblest animal we have in the United Kingdom, who contributes not a little to our table, and a great deal to our sport. What does this outcry against deer-forests mean? Nothing less than the almost total extinction of their present denizens. Deer, it is true, do not mind sheep; but their necessary concomitants, men and dogs, they utterly abhor. I have always seen deer more frightened at a man's voice or the bark of a dog, than at the report of a rifle. If, therefore, all deer-forests are to be turned into sheep-walks, as their enemies propose, there would soon be an end of the deer, except perhaps a happening one, who would eventually meet his death late in the year, and when unfit for food, at the hand of the poacher. It will, no doubt, be said that in old times there were plenty of deer for sport, and fewer forests. I answer that at that time there were not nearly so many sheep, and consequently fewer shepherds and their attendant dogs. The deer were not hunted from one end of the country to the other; and, except in the "rutting" season, were generally to be found the next day somewhere near the place where they had been seen the day before. Now—and I speak with considerable experience on the subject—this is not the case. On sheep or uncleared ground it is rare that stags stop for any length of time.

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They know what to expect, are restless in consequence, and travel as fast as they can between the one forest from which they have been disturbed and the other where they know they will be at peace, so far as shouting men and barking dogs are concerned. Hinds are neither so restless nor so frightened at these sounds as stags, and will remain on sheep ground for years, —taking care, however, to hide themselves in the thickest of the birchwoods, only going out a short distance to feed, and dashing back into cover on the slightest indication of danger. Stags, when disturbed in this way, will go for miles. I contend, therefore, that to turn all forests into sheep-farms would almost eradicate the deer. They would be driven from pillar to post, would never have a moment's peace; they would put on no fat to enable them to face the cold and stormy winter, would wander down to the villages on the sea-coast miserable bags of bones, and at last a dastardly charge of slugs would put an end to their existence.

I do not believe I have overstated my case; and I appeal to those who love the wild red-deer and all his ways, who have watched him through glass, stalked him in his native corries, and derived endless pleasure and not a little food for thought in his pursuit, to save him from such a fate as this. My pleading must, I know, of necessity be addressed to a small number of people in this country so far as practical knowledge of the subject is concerned, for comparatively few have ever enjoyed the sport of deer-stalking; but taking a broader ground, I do confidently appeal to

the majority of Englishmen, who are sportsmen at heart and in feelings, to help with their voices as well as their pens the cause which I believe every *Highlander* has at heart. I cannot think it is he who has raised this outcry against the deer; but I attribute it entirely to the advanced section of the Radical party, the agitation-monger, who always seems to flourish, however badly off every one else may be; and to the Lowland sheep-farmer from Dumfriesshire and the neighbouring counties, in whose hands so many farms in the north of Scotland are at present. The true Highlander is too fond of the deer and too fond of sport to wish for this; and, above all, he never forgets that it was for sheep and not for deer that so many houses were razed to the ground, and so many glens made desolate. No; as long as he has grass for his cow and a few sheep, with a fore-quarter of venison now and again to compensate him for the small damage which may have been done to his croft, he likes to see the deer. The Lowland farmer, on the contrary, has been brought up where there are no deer; he sees no beauty in them, is no sportsman (I speak of them as a class, and not as individuals), and cares about nothing but his sheep. He fancies that the deer in some way interfere with the comfort and feeding of his flocks; forgetting that the landlord, if he can only advertise his shooting with the words, "There are always deer on the ground"—an ambiguous phrase, to say the least of it—will get an enhanced rent for it, which he would otherwise probably put on the farmer. What possible damage can five, ten, or even twenty travelling stags do?

There is another reason why the Highlander should like the deer.

It is from his race, and not from the Lowlander, that stalkers, keepers, and gillies are drawn. The two first get good wages, comfortable houses, and many perquisites. Gillies also are well paid—in some places almost too well; but I utterly deny, as I have seen stated in print, but by a person who on the face of it knows nothing of the matter, that they do nothing but drink all winter. In almost every case I have known, they return, when the shooting season is over, to their ordinary employment. There are exceptions to every rule, and, no doubt, here as elsewhere; but I defy any one to say that the Scotch stalkers, keepers, and gillies are not as a class marvellously well read and informed, and every one of them, in manners and conversation, a perfect gentleman. This result could hardly be attained by a systematic course of hard drinking all the winter. The following is an example of the fascination which deer-stalking exercises over those who engage in it. I went in one day to see an old stalker who was dying. He was talking away to himself, all about deer; and a few minutes afterwards he died, with his hand on my shoulder, murmuring, "A good beast an' a good heid." He had finished his last stalk, as he always liked to do, with a death. He had often told me that he wished to die on the hill; and once, when he was very ill, he crawled out of the house, climbed up as far as he was able, and then calmly lay down, waiting for the end. His wish was not gratified, for he lived to end his days in his cottage, as I have recounted above.

It cannot be too distinctly understood that this agitation against deer-forests is only the thin end of the wedge, and that, if it is successful, the abolition of the

game-laws must shortly follow. This latter will, I venture to think, prove an evil as much to the farmer as to the landlord. Indeed, on this subject, one of the largest farmers in Scotland, and an advanced Radical to boot, said,—If the game-laws are to be abolished, there must be enacted “a varra streengent la’ o’ trespass.”

And this brings me to another branch of the same subject, that of opening the mountains of Scotland to all and sundry who may wish to walk over them. The idea seems too preposterous to be seriously argued; but as it has been the subject of speeches in the House of Commons,¹ where to my mind they invariably make a mess of anything connected with sport, and seriously replied to in a leader in the ‘Field,’ I should like to say a few words. In the first place, why should the proposed law be confined to Scotland? Why not allow people at all times and all seasons to wander at will through the parks, woods, and fields of England? Why are Scotch landlords and farmers to submit to losses and inconveniences which would not be tolerated for an instant by either class in England? Why is the Scotch landlord to be robbed of his rent—for that would be the result of such an act as this—and sheep-farmers see their sheep disturbed and worried, while the Englishman escapes unhurt? I can scarcely believe that legislation is really intended on such lines as these, and can only think that it is solely meant as a menace to deer-forests. I need hardly say to those who understand deer and their habits, what would be the result. It would mean, of course, the total extinction of forests as sources of

revenue. For who would take one when he knew, just as he was getting in to a fine stag, that there was every probability of a personally conducted party stepping gaily on to the sky-line, or, worse still, giving the deer the wind. Not one of this party would, I believe, knowingly wish to spoil sport, but the result is the same.

As an instance of the ignorance of the ordinary British tourist on such matters, poor Frank Buckland tells a most amusing story; but as he has missed more than half of it, and I think it will bear re-telling, I here give it in full. The conversation below was carried on between Campbell, the driver of the coach between Ballachulish and the head of Loch Lomond, who was always chaffing tourists, and one of that class who occupied the box-seat by his side. They had crawled up Glencoe, and were rattling along from King’s House through the Black Mount Forest, when the tourist began his interrogations as follows:—

British Tourist. I say, coachman, who does this property belong to?

Campbell. The Marquis.

B. T. What Marquis?

C. (In an angry tone, and as if there was only one Marquis in the world.) Breadalbane.

B. T. And what do you call this place?

C. The forest.

B. T. (Looking about him incredulously.) But I don’t see any trees.

C. (With astonishment and contempt.) Wha ever heerd o’ trees in a forest?

B. T. Well, but, coachman, if there are are no trees in this forest, what are there?

C. (Shortly.) Deer.

¹ The Access to Mountains Bill was not printed when this paper was written.

B. T. I don't see any deer about.

C. It's no' to say there are no deer because *you* dinna see them.

B. T. (Rather subdued.) Did you ever shoot a deer, coachman?

C. (Looking at him out of the corner of his eye as he touched up the near leader.) Plenty!

B. T. Tell us about it.

C. Weel, ye ken, one day I was oot wi' the Marquis, and we had twa double-barrelled Purdies. We cam' up to the deer, and the Marquis he says to me, "Mr Cammel, you will shoot first." "I will not, my lord," says I. Says he, "Mr Cammel, you will do as you are told." With that I put up my gun and I killed three; but the Marquis he put up his gun and he *got* sivin.

The conclusion of this voracious story brought the coach to the end of the stage, and history does not say whether Campbell or the tourist pursued the conversation. I have little fear of any bill being carried which would injuriously affect the sheep-farmer; but that it should be seriously argued is a bad sign of the times.

Now let me try and describe a day's deer-stalking. It is a fine morning at the end of September, there is a touch of frost in the air which makes walking a pleasure, and that marvellous clearness of the atmosphere which only a north wind produces. Each mountain-top looks close at hand, and every rock and inequality stands out sharp and well defined. Those white fleecy clouds, banked up, tier upon tier, in the north, indicate that we shall have snow before long; and the deer are evidently of the same opinion, for they have come lower down to feed during the night than they have done for months. We start in two parties from the lodge, and separate at the wooden

bridge over the burn with mutual wishes for good-luck. Ours is the north beat, and after a sharp walk of a mile or so up the glen, we take out our glass and search the various corries in our view for deer. And now the practised eye and knowledge of the stalker shows itself. While we are searching every nook and cranny, and all the most unlikely places, Sandy has put his glass almost to a foot on the deer.

"There a good staag in Còr Dhu, and three ither along wi' hum, no' bad either," says he.

"Where are they?" we reply.

"D'ye see yon grey stone in the heid o' the corrie? Weel, dra' the gless straight doon aboot two hunder yerds and ye'll see them lyin'—the big staag wi' his heid facing ye."

After many ineffectual attempts and more directions, in which the "grey stone" bears a prominent part, we at length find the deer, and just as we do so the big stag gets up and stretches himself.

"Man, he's a gran' beast yon," from Sandy.

He certainly does look splendid standing against the vivid green of the grass round a spring, and we are all for stalking him at once. A stopper is, however, put on that by Sandy saying—

"D'ye no see that lot o' hinds lying below them?"

After much hesitation, caused by having to find them, we say we do.

"Weel, the wind willna let us get at them from above, the hinds 'll see us if we come from below, an' the sides o' the corrie are that plain they wouldna hide a mouse. I dinna see hoo we can manage them, but we'll try whatever."

Off we went, but had only gone a very short distance when we found that Sandy was right, and

that we could not get at them till either they or the hinds moved. There was nothing for it but to wait. The stags were near the march, and much too good to leave. Sandy says the best has ten points "whatever," and a good beast as well. It seems a weary time waiting. We put up our glass now and then to see if there is any change; but we find them all complacently chewing the cud, and seemingly with no intention of moving for hours.

"They'll rise about twelve o'clock," says Sandy, who seems to know intuitively what they will do, "and most likely the staags will feed up wind over the shoulder into Cór Beg, and we'll get a fine chance at them there."

Sure enough he was right, for a few minutes before twelve, up got the stags one by one, and began feeding slowly but surely in the direction we wished them to go. When we saw them over the shoulder, our real work began. Up a hill like a house-side we clambered, Sandy making the pace a hot one; and after "many a weary step, and many a groan" as each ridge seemed to be the top and turned out not to be, we at length stood panting but triumphant on the summit. A few minutes' pause for breath, and we are off again, over very different ground, however, for the top is nearly as flat as a billiard-table, and covered with moss and lichens, as easy to walk on and as pleasant as the softest pile carpet. At last we reach the top of Cór Beg, and, carefully sliding down the ridge, we look over, and to our great delight see the stags about 500 yards below, looking to the naked eye no bigger than sheep. A creep down a rocky water-course, luckily dry, but full of loose stones, which Sandy seems never to displace, but

which we hardly treat in the same manner, brings us to within 200 yards of the deer. Then comes the question, How are we to get any nearer? Our friendly water-course has come to an end, and there seems nothing for it but to clamber back and try another route. The deer, however, decide the matter for us by feeding on until they are in full view; and, to make matters worse, one of them lies down exactly facing us, so that we can get neither forwards nor backwards. The others soon follow his example. They are still too far off for a shot, and another long wait seems inevitable, for Sandy says—

"They'll no rise till four o'clock."

"Good gracious! you don't mean that!" we say. "Why, it's only half-past one now!"

We take our lunch in fear and trembling that the stags will see us; smoking is out of the question. There is not a breath of wind, and nothing breaks the utter stillness save the croaking of a raven overhead. Sandy says the bird is waiting for his meal; we hope he will not have long to wait. We can only see the horns of the big stag, and judge from their position that he is enjoying a *siesta*, an example we vainly endeavour to follow; for the minutes pass like hours. All at once Sandy touches us on the shoulder, at the same time putting the rifle into our hands, and saying "Look out." We look up cautiously and see the deer standing, and staring up the hill, but not in our direction. The best stag looks as big as a bull on the sky-line; we think it is impossible to miss him; and are just going to shoot, when Sandy says—

"Wait a wee; they'll perhaps come nearer."

We now see what has disturbed them. Master Reynard comes trot-

ting down the brae, and right up to the deer, who view him with evident distrust, for they move quickly in our direction. The big stag is not more than 100 yards off.

"Tak' him noo," says Sandy.

So we aim carefully behind the shoulder, and pull the trigger. The smoke hangs so that we can see nothing, and when it clears off there is not a deer to be seen.

"Missed," we say, laconically.

"'Deed no'," says Sandy; "we'll find him just over yon knowe."

We walked down, and sure enough, there he was, stone dead. A fine stag, with a wide strong head of eleven points; and Sandy prophesies he will weigh near eighteen stone.

"Yon tod (*Anglice*, fox) did well for us the day," remarked he.

"He did, indeed," we reply.

"Did ye ever hear about the tod-hunt at Inverary?"

We said we had not.

"Weel," said he, "they had a tod-hunt there, and a great gathering from all pairts. First cam' his Grace the Duke of Argyll, then came the rest of the nobles and gentry, then came the gillies with the dogs, and *last of all there came the tod.*"

Shades of Whyte Melville and Surtees, listen to this! What eventually became of the unfortunate "tod" he did not tell us, but this reversal of the order of things amused us immensely. We decide we have done a good day's work as we trudge home with that light and airy step which is only to be bought by the consciousness of having got a good stag. So ended our day in the forest; and I sincerely hope I shall not live to see the time when mistaken legislation

has put an end to a sport which gives healthful employment to so many people, and preserves to us the one picturesque wild animal we have left.

Finally, I would ask—Are you a philosopher? If you are, you can much increase your knowledge, and you will have to bring all your philosophy to your aid to make you a successful deer-stalker. Are you an artist? What a kaleidoscope of beauteous scenes constantly revolves before your eyes! What marvellous lights and shades meet you at every turn! what wondrous colouring is on mountain and loch! and what a subject for your pencil is the quarry itself! Are you a naturalist? Do not believe those who tell you that deer-forests are only vast solitudes. You will find them teeming with life; and the habits of the animals and birds you will meet with form a study that will well repay any amount of labour. And lastly, Are you a sportsman? I do not mean one of the Brummagem sort, who do not care to turn out till twelve or one o'clock, and after standing for an hour or so at the end of a covert, go home to tea; but one who loves sport because of its uncertainty and difficulty. To you I say, Go out stalking, if you have the chance. It is full of excitement, and the better you understand it the more you will like it. It requires keen sight, supple limbs, great observation, unfailing patience, and quick decision to make a successful stalker. Without them, you will never become an adept in the art. With them, and a knowledge of the ground—which, of course, comes readily enough—you are fit to stalk a stag to-morrow.

THOUGHTS ON FREE-TRADE POLICY—
1846 TO 1885.

THE free-trade policy of the Cobden school was, after a long and bitter struggle, adopted by the all but universal voice of the nation; and now, at the lapse of nearly forty years, it may well be asked whether it has in any degree answered the expectations of its advocates, or falsified the predictions of those who talked so confidently of its success. That such a question is pertinent, may be inferred from the position which the Cobdenists themselves now occupy. The Cobden Club is no longer an active propaganda, but a defensive citadel for its beloved dogmas against the attacks of Fair-Traders and Protectionists. Of late years it has had great difficulty in persuading the commercial and industrial classes that the evil days on which they have fallen have not been aggravated by the rash and one-sided policy into which the nation was led by Cobden and his followers. That the arguments of Cobden have lost much of their original efficacy may be inferred from the rise of the numerous and influential body of Fair-Traders, as well as by the existence of a still wider class, which, without renouncing its free-trade ideals, is anxious that the practical working of the policy should be carefully inquired into. The Royal Commission on the causes of the present depression of trade, which the Government has announced, will throw much light on the results of free trade in our commerce and industries; and in view of the interest in the subject which its inquiries seem likely to excite, the time seems a favourable one for bringing under the attention of the public a few plain

facts regarding the failures of Free Trade.

There can be no doubt that during the last forty years the business and wealth of this country have increased to an extent unparalleled in any previous age. The disciples of Cobden claim this as the result of his policy; but, while admitting that the free importation of grain and all kinds of farm produce has been of advantage to all classes except those connected with agriculture, it would be very far from the truth to attribute the national advancement solely to free trade in imports. In fact, it may with more truth be said that the country has prospered in spite of, rather than in consequence of, the legislation of 1846.

The following, among other causes, have contributed to that end:—

1. The discovery of gold in Australia has had a material effect upon the trade of the United Kingdom. It enabled the colonists to buy largely of our manufactures, and a great portion of their gains going to enrich themselves, they returned with their fortunes to this country. From the province of Victoria alone, the total quantity of gold raised from 1851 to 1883 is estimated at upwards of 52 millions of ounces, and the aggregate sterling value at upwards of 208 million pounds.

2. Prior to 1840 there were scarcely any railways in this country. Their entire extent up to that date would probably not exceed 2000 miles. At the close of the year 1883 there were 18,681 miles in use, and the total capital employed was 784 million pounds sterling.

It cannot be denied that this enormous sum (greater than the total amount of our national debt) has all been expended within the country; and if there is deducted even a very large sum for land, materials, and professional services, there remains an enormous balance, diffused chiefly among the manufacturing and working classes in the shape of wages paid in forming the lines, and in the production of the rails, engines, and carriages with which they are equipped. The same remarks apply to the railways constructed in our colonies and dependencies. In India alone, there are now upwards of 10,000 miles in operation, upon which 142 millions of pounds have already been expended; while in Canada, 7500 miles have been built, and in Australia 5426 miles. In like manner the construction of railways in Europe and America has tended greatly to the enrichment of Great Britain, for a large portion of the rails and machinery was obtained in this country.

3. It may seem rather paradoxical to cite war as an element of prosperity to any country; but it cannot be doubted that the Crimean war, from 1854 to 1856, was productive of great prosperity to the manufacturing interests of Great Britain. The stores poured with such profusion into the Crimea were nearly all the produce of this country, and the cost was largely composed of wages.

In the next place, the civil war in America during its continuance paralysed the industry of both North and South, and the vacuum was supplied chiefly by Great Britain—manifestly so in the shipping trade, which in America was almost entirely extinguished, and has never yet regained its former dimensions. Further on, the Franco-German war in 1870 had a very injurious effect upon the

trade of both countries, and again we largely profited by their misfortunes.

In how different a spirit have the late Government acted in regard to the supplies to our troops during the recent unfortunate campaign in Egypt! In place of these being supplied from our own country, as they were during the Crimean war, the Government ordered enormous quantities from America, on the plea that they could not be got at home. This we do not believe; and if it be the case, we are surely come to a sad pass if in times of war we are dependent upon foreign nations for the feeding of our troops.

Sufficient, we think, has been said to show that the free-trade party are not entitled to assume that the adoption of Cobden's theories was the cause of our good trade for the thirty years from 1846 to 1876.

The true principles of free trade we hold to consist in an exchange of commodities between different countries, each producing what the soil, climate, and habits of the people render most beneficial to themselves. As an example, it is evident that the nature of the climate of India, and the habits of the people, render the production of grain more suitable for them than the manufacture of pig-iron, which is better suited to the more temperate climate and stronger frames of the people of this country. In fact, if free trade in its true sense could be universally established throughout the world, the happiest results that could be looked for would then be attained; and the free-traders of the Cobden school, while they had quite in view the fact that, although we might throw open our ports to foreign goods and manufactures, we could not compel foreign nations to do the same to us, they

really assumed and believed that as soon as we introduced free trade, other countries would at once follow our example. Their expectation has not been realised; and we entertain no doubt that, had Cobden lived to this day, he would have been forced to admit that, while his principles were sound, their practice had been a failure.

A universal adoption of free trade throughout the world is of all things the most unlikely to happen. Other nations, like our own, are one and all burdened with debt, upon which interest must be paid; but even were they free of this burden, there is a necessary expense connected with every government which must be met by taxation of some kind. In few countries except our own can such taxes be levied directly from the pockets of the people; and the most convenient way, beyond internal taxation, such as excise upon spirits and beer produced within the country, is by a duty levied upon imports. It is the province of the statesman so to discriminate as to levy these duties in the manner least burdensome to the people, and in a greater degree upon those articles which are admitted to be luxuries. Some countries, from the magnitude of their debts and the enormous burden of their military and naval establishments, require a heavier taxation than others; but all nations require some, and it is hopeless to expect that we shall ever see a wholesale abandonment of customs duties throughout the world.

This principle being admitted, it follows that free trade, in the sense of an absence of taxation upon imported articles between nations, never can take place.

In the next place, we may admit that, from the density of population in our country, we cannot grow sufficient corn to feed the people,

and are therefore dependent to a certain extent upon imported grain. We shall not stop at present to inquire how this dependence on foreigners has been aggravated by unfair competition with our own farmers, who pay their share of local and imperial taxation, from all of which the foreign grower is free.

The first Napoleon was wont to show his contempt for our country by calling us a nation of shopkeepers; and if he meant in that category to include manufacturers, we hope we shall continue shopkeepers to the end of the chapter. If, on the other hand, we were to become dissociated from such employments, and become a nation living upon the proceeds of our invested capital, forming a portion of that happy brotherhood designated by Mr Chamberlain as those "who toil not, neither do they spin," then we could understand the theory of buying in the cheapest market—we being merely annuitants having nothing to sell. We could understand such annuitants calling out for the abolition of all duties on imports. One would say, I am a thorough teetotaler, and why should I pay sixpence per pound upon my tea? Another would say, I am a heavy smoker, and why should I pay 3s. 10d. per pound on my tobacco? A third would say, I enjoy a social glass, and why should I pay 10s. 4d. per gallon on my whisky?

It appears to us that one of the greatest mistakes made by Sir Robert Peel, in accepting the doctrines of free trade, was that he of necessity was obliged to abandon any favour shown to our own colonies. Had the corn-laws, as they stood in 1844, been still in existence, the duty on foreign corn, at the present low price of wheat, would have been the highest rate exigible—viz., 20s. per quarter; whereas

wheat or other grain coming from Canada was only liable to a duty of 1s. per quarter, irrespective of the price ruling in this country. At that time the importing of grain from India or Australia was a thing never contemplated. In like manner, nearly every article in the customs tariff had one rate for foreign goods, and a very much lower rate for the produce of our colonies. In this way the colonies and the mother country were bound together; but of necessity, when Parliament adopted Cobden's theory of free imports, that tie was snapped asunder, and some of our colonies are now as zealous protectionists as France or Spain. It is an old saying and a true one, that "blood is thicker than water;" and we had a very good example of this in one of our early wars with China. In a very unequal fight with the Chinese fleet, we were on the point of being beaten by superior force, when the captain of an American frigate (we are sorry that at this moment we cannot recall his name), who witnessed our distress, exclaimed, "Blood is thicker than water!" and generously gave us his assistance, which at once decided the day, and ensured our complete success.

It is in this spirit that we would deal with all questions in which our country is concerned, and we cannot illustrate our meaning better than by supposing the following case: If an accident happened by which a boat containing three men was upset, and they were thrown into the sea; that one was a British subject, another an American, and the third a Frenchman; that we could only save one at a time, and might not be able to save all. How would we, if we had the means of selection, proceed? Why, we should first save or attempt to save our fellow-countryman, then our cousin the

American, and last of all the Frenchman.

In the same spirit would we deal with all questions affecting ourselves and our colonies and foreign nations. This is the spirit which will guide all nations, although some of them may be found shouting "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

We all know the great rejoicing over the French treaty negotiated in 1860 by Mr Cobden with the then Emperor of the French. It was a great advance upon the previous system, and no one doubted that by the time it expired France would without reserve adopt our policy, and British manufactures would be received duty free in France, as French goods are received in this country. What has been the result? When the treaty expired the French attempted to exact higher duties, and the discussion ended by abandoning the treaty altogether, and now we are worse off than we were before.

Why, may we ask, did we lower the duties on French wine from 5s. 6d. to 1s. per gallon, and on French plain silk from 11s. per lb. to nothing? And what have we got in exchange? Nothing. Indeed France is at present engaged in increasing its tariffs, and the measure has been approved of in the Chamber of Deputies by 364 to 136 votes. What France has done, is simply what other nations have done and are still doing—namely, encouraging their own manufactures rather than those produced by foreigners.

At this moment, Germany and France have both amended their corn-laws by increasing the duty on grain; and quite recently Prince Bismarck said, that "the measure was meant to protect national labour, and to promote the welfare of the poor; and whoever asserted the contrary told an untruth."

These facts prove that neither of these countries has any intention even now of adopting free trade; and also, that in the opinion of Bismarck, which always commands respect, it is not for the interest of his or any other country to do so.

We have now to address ourselves specially to the working classes, and ask them to consider how they are affected by the working of a measure which was held up to them by Cobden, and is still held up to them by the infallible John Bright as the panacea for all evils affecting the body corporate.

At one of the last appearances in Parliament of the late lamented and respected Postmaster-General, Mr Fawcett, a question was asked if it was true that the Government were being supplied with post-cards by German paper-makers. He replied that it was so, because he could buy them cheaper in Germany than in this country. We see from the Post-office returns that during the year 1883 there were 144 millions of post-cards delivered in the United Kingdom. We have no means of knowing what the cost of this enormous mass of matter might be. We shall venture to say that it cost £100,000. Is it too much to say that the first cost of the raw material composing these cards was £10,000? It follows that the remaining £90,000 is lost to the workmen and paper-makers in this country, in the shape of wages and profit on the manufacture, and is transferred to the pockets of our German competitors. Knowing how keenly all Government contracts are competed for, we should be surprised if the difference in price between the British and German paper-makers exceeds two per cent; and for this miserable pittance our own countrymen are ignored, and our business handed over to Germany. We are

informed that the contract for the paper used for our telegraph messages has in like manner found its way to a foreign paper-maker.

If it could be supposed that all the paper-makers in Great Britain had entered into what our American cousins call a Ring, and resolved to supply the Government with no paper under a certain price, then we could understand why they should go elsewhere, with the view of breaking up an unhealthy combination; but nothing short of this would, in our view, justify any Government with a spark of patriotism going abroad for what they could so easily obtain at home.

In a recent discussion in Parliament, Mr Mundella was twitted with being interested in a manufacturing concern in Saxony, where the manufacturer is not troubled with factory inspectors or factory laws, and where he can keep open his mill for seven days in the week, and work his factory hands for twenty-four hours a-day, if flesh and blood would endure so long. Mr Mundella disclaimed all connection with the concern in question, and of course we accept his statement. We know, however, that if Mr Mundella has no connection with such concerns, others have; and year by year it is notorious that British capital is being invested in foreign lands in manufactures which, if fair trade were coincident with free trade, would have remained in this country, and given employment to thousands of our fellow-countrymen and women. A notable instance of this is to be found in Paisley, which may justly be called the headquarters of the thread trade in Scotland. Two firms there, not less remarkable for their success in business than for the generous application of their wealth, found that, owing to the prohibitory tariff of

the United States, their trade with that country would certainly be curtailed, if not destroyed, and they resolved to erect factories on the other side of the Atlantic. They have done so, on a very extensive scale, and thereby they save the ruinous import duties on their goods. It is said that their gains in America greatly exceed their profits in this country. It is also said that, when a proposal was mooted some time ago to reduce the American tariff on thread, these same gentlemen, who are ardent free-traders in this country, waited upon the President, and remonstrated with him upon the proposed reduction. "We have," they said, "embarked an enormous sum in fixed plant and machinery, in your country, and if the tariff were reduced the market would be flooded with British thread, and our capital would be lost." We do not blame these gentlemen for attending to their own interest, but we do blame the system which offers an inducement to our countrymen to transfer their capital and their energies to other lands at the expense of their native country.

As another instance take that of the iron trade of the west of Scotland. The price of pig-iron for the last twelve months has been little above 40s. per ton, at present it is about 41s.; but it is generally understood that no maker can produce good iron even at that price. Supposing that pig-iron costs 50s. per ton, the lordship to the mine-owner on the mineral will run from 3s. to 5s. per ton; and the entire balance is expended in wages of one kind or another, from the manager who overlooks the work to the miner who extracts the ore from the mine. Now let us see how the British iron-maker is treated in America. The freight alone on such a weighty article as pig-iron from the Clyde

to New York ought to be a sufficient protection; but, in addition, the United States Government levy an import duty of 27s. per ton, so that, with freight at, say, 10s. per ton, pig-iron cannot be laid down in New York for less than—

	Per ton.
Cost of pig-iron at	
Glasgow, . . .	£2 1 0
Freight, . . .	0 10 0
Duty, . . .	1 7 0
	£3 18 0

irrespective of any charges for commission or insurance—so that the cost at New York is nearly double what it is at home. No doubt we shall be told that this is a burden which the Americans themselves bear, and that is so far true; but the result is that their iron trade is fostered and protected at our expense, while we receive all their manufactures and all their produce, with the single exception of tobacco, duty-free. It is obvious that our export trade is thus unjustly impeded, because we have not the facilities for carrying it on which we in our mistaken generosity extend to America.

The sugar trade furnishes another instance of the manner in which we are unfairly dealt with by Continental nations. France, Austria, and Germany allow large bounties on the export of sugar; and at present there is no doubt we get cheaper sugar—but what is the price we are paying for it? The utter ruin of our West India Colonies; and when that is accomplished, we shall be dependent upon other nations for our supplies, and certainly be required to pay a much higher price.

Many similar instances could be given, but we shall mention only one more. Passing recently the warehouse of one of our largest dealers in musical instruments, we saw a

number of pianos being discharged. On inquiry, we found they were manufactured in America, and, according to our beneficent legislation, admitted to this country duty free. Let us look into this matter. The pianos were expensive articles, worth probably about £120 each. It cannot be said that they were intended for the working class, or were even within the scope of most of the middle rank: they were, in fact, luxuries intended only for the wealthy. Suppose these pianos are sold at £120 each, and that we deduct £20 as profit to the maker, to the importer, and the cost of freight and insurance, this leaves £100 for each piano. Is it too much to say that of this sum £15, or at most £20, would cover the first cost of the wood, the iron, the brass, and ivory of which the piano is composed? If this be so, it follows that £80 has been expended on wages alone—that is, so much money put into the pockets of the American workman, and withheld from our own countrymen. On the other hand, suppose a manufacturer of pianos in this country made a shipment to America, how would he be treated? He would of course require to pay the freight, insurance, and other charges, as in the case of pianos sent from America, but in addition he would be taxed an import duty of, if we mistake not, 40 per cent *ad valorem*. So that, in America, his piano could not be sold to yield £120 at home for less than about £168—a protection to the American manufacturer and his workmen of no less than £48 on each piano.

Examples might be multiplied, but enough has surely been said to prove how unfair to the manufacturing and working classes of this country is the present system of free imports, as opposed to ex-

ports with duties amounting almost to a prohibition.

As in the case of iron, it may no doubt be said that if the American chooses to pay £168 for a British piano, the duty of £48 is paid by him and not by the British manufacturer. But we repeat, that is no answer to our argument. It is not likely that any American will pay £168 for a piano which he can purchase in his own country for £120. The result is, that the British manufacturer is compelled to compete on unequal terms with his American competitor; and this operates to the prejudice, not only of the British manufacturer, but also of the workman whom he employs. This, we say, is not fair trade, and in the case of the workman is not compensated by his getting his bread cheaper; because, of what use is that benefit to him if you at the same time lower his wages, or perhaps deprive him of work altogether?

A few years ago an address was presented to Messrs Bright and Chamberlain by the trades-unions of Birmingham, calling upon them to consider the unfairness with which trade in this country was treated; but we never heard that these gentlemen ever took the trouble to listen to the application.

It is said by the free import party that the country is pledged to continue the present system, and that it is impossible to return to a state of things abolished forty years ago. Surely we are not so foolish as to maintain an unsound system, simply because we have once adopted it, if we now find that other nations who were expected to follow us have not done so, but in most cases have increased their duties since 1846. We are much in the position of the one juryman who, failing to bring round the others to his view

of the case, exclaimed—"I never in my life met eleven such obstinate men!" The single dissident may have been right, but the strong presumption is the other way.

The next question is, how the present state of matters is to be remedied. Our answer is, let us make a federation with our colonies; admit all their products free on condition that they admit ours on the same terms. There never was a time more opportune than the present for such an arrangement. The loyalty displayed by Australia, India, and Canada in regard to our troubles in Egypt, and our threatened rupture with Russia, lately awakened a feeling of brotherhood in this country, and have even roused the phlegmatic temperament of Lord Derby to the belief that a closer intimacy with our colonial brothers would be of advantage both to the mother country and the colonists.

There is not one single article imported into this country, which cannot be obtained in a greater or less degree from one or other of our own colonies. Let us therefore say to them, open your ports to us, and we shall open our ports to you. There are three or four articles upon which, for revenue purposes, we must raise a duty—viz., wines and spirits, tea and tobacco; but while we charge our colonies a certain modified duty on these, let us charge an increased, even a double duty, upon similar products obtained from foreign countries. Thus, our present duty on tea is 6d. per pound. Let that be reduced to 3d. on Indian tea, while tea from China pays 6d. Let the present wine-duties, which are moderate enough, be exacted from Australian and Cape wines, and double that amount levied from the products of Spain, Portugal, France, and Germany. The

same rule should be followed with tobacco. Whatever the import duty may be, let one rate be levied on colonial produce, and double on that of foreigners. Should any nation elect to allow our manufactures to enter their ports duty-free, by all means extend to them a similar privilege; but until this is done, let us recognise the simple principle that our colonies and dependencies are our own kith and kindred, and are to be preferred to all nations who do not recognise the authority of the British Crown.

One word in conclusion. We have already said this is a question deeply affecting the working men and those interested in the trade and manufactures of this country.

The extended Franchise Bill has now become the law of the land, and the power of returning members of Parliament is virtually in the hands of the industrial classes. A new Parliament will be elected in November. We ask those who now possess the franchise, as well as those who will shortly be entitled to a vote, to consider the question calmly and deliberately for themselves. Let them not be led aside by the sophisms of the Cobden school, but consider whether the present depressed state of trade in this country is not owing to the action of foreign nations shutting out our manufactures by excessive duties, while we are permitting them to enter our ports duty-free.

When a candidate for parliamentary honours appears before a constituency, it is of small matter whether he professes to be Whig, Tory, or Radical, but let him be asked explicitly to state whether he will allow matters to drift on as they are now doing, or insist upon such an alteration in our laws as will give a fair field to British enterprise all over the world; and if that be granted, we have no fear of the result.

GENERAL GORDON.

THE death of General Gordon completed the greatest tragedy of contemporary times. The only one that has approached it in the sensation produced was that less perfect, perhaps more romantic, ending of an exciting and remarkable personal drama—the death of Maximilian of Mexico. In the case of the latter, personal ambition on a great scale, which was mingled with much that was noble and magnanimous, yet was personal ambition, and contemplated a great recompense, was the motive power—a motive high in its way, yet poor beside the almost incredible self-devotion of Gordon's sacrifice,—so that in the only case which can be compared to his, his superiority is of the most marked description. Everything in him, indeed, has contributed to heighten the effect of the final act of his life. His previous successes, never for himself; his extraordinary personal power and influence; the tenderness, simplicity, humour of the man; his roughness, even and susceptible temper, and impatience of common rule; his Puritanism and profound sense of religion,—all increased the interest and the charm. A Bohemian, yet a fervent Christian—who could desire a more original and attractive combination?—he was all that the popular imagination desires as a hero. And the requirements of the popular imagination, when truly inspired, are great. Sometimes it will be taken in by a pinchbeck reputation and accept glitter for gold; but when it is unanimous, it is almost always just. And Gordon is the type above all others which commends itself to this universal judge—which is so keen to perceive the

taint of self-interest, so ready to appreciate generosity and independence. Of few men can it be said that their danger, their death, is not only a national calamity, but to their countrymen almost an individual grief. In most houses in England the day of our hero's death was as the day when a dear friend has died. That there were some painful exceptions to this rule, only proves it the more absolutely—for the horror and disgrace of having been instrumental in a dear friend's death may show itself in levity as well as in mourning—and men may fly to a ball or a theatre to forget, as other men may go to the grave to weep there, which is the woman's way. The national heart is still sore for Gordon; the sense of loss, the sense of disaster and calamity, and worse than all, the penetrating sense of blame which his name suggests, will not easily fade away. England has ill-used many who have spent their life in her cause; but perhaps none, in modern times, so cruelly, so completely: yet England has given him something little less than adoration, and his name is a name to conjure withal from the highest to the lowest. How are we to reconcile this paradox? Perhaps there was, in the first part, something that was inevitable, as there is in the latter something that is inconsiderate. He is dead, and his good sword is rust, and his soul is with the saints. All the records that have been made of him have been eulogies or lamentations; and that insidious political breath of depreciation, which is creeping up chill around his knightly name, with intent to wither the laurels with which a unanimous world has surrounded

it, may, perhaps, affect some of those who know little of him save the litanies. We shall endeavour in the following pages to show the man as he shows himself in the more voluminous literature of the subject,—a man never careful to put his best foot foremost, or show his own excellence—a little disdainful, a little proud, a little hot-headed, sweet, tender, and patient to the heart. This, too, is a paradox: but one more delightful to deal with than those confusing problems which the English race and Government give to the world to solve.

Charles George Gordon was born in 1833, of a family of soldiers—his ancestors for several generations having spent their lives in the military service—and of Scotch origin, though not birth. "Gordon was educated at Taunton, and at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich," not apparently with much demonstration of particular intellect, since we are told of an instance when, "during his cadetship at the Academy, he was rebuked for incompetence, and told that he would never make an officer." In answer to which the high-spirited boy, no doubt stung to the quick, "tore thee paulets from his shoulders and flung them at his superior's feet," who, no doubt, thought the young rebel a very troublesome youngster, as would be natural enough. The succinct record informs us merely that he was lieutenant of Engineers in 1854, when he would be about twenty-one. The first service he saw was in the Crimea; but we can find no details of any importance of his experiences there. He had his full share in the fatigues of that laborious siege. "I have now been thirty-four times twenty-four hours in the trenches," he writes,—"*more than a month straight on end: it gets*

tedious after a time, but if anything is going on, one does not mind." At the time of his death there were various heroic stories in the newspapers of incidents of this first campaign—the cool humour of the young subaltern, and the manner in which he held his men to their duties. Long afterward, in the soliloquy which was the sole outlet of his mind during his months of confinement at Khartoum, a half-comic recollection of these early experiences flits across his fancy. There were some who thought it beneath their dignity to "bob" when the bullets came whizzing about their heads in the cold Crimean nights. So-and-so, declaring himself a family man, "bobbed" on principle,—the recollection made him smile when the ill-directed bullets were flying through the air, under that blazing brazen sky in which no hope or shadow was.

We know little more of Gordon in his youth; but already he had begun to show the makings of a great soldier. The late Colonel C. Chesney, a thoroughly qualified judge, wrote of him, that "he attracted the notice of his superiors, not merely by his energy and activity, but by a special aptitude for war, developing itself amid the trench-work before Sebastopol in a personal knowledge of the enemy's movements such as no other officer attained. We used to send him to find out what new move the Russians were making." He must have begun to develop here that keen observation of all that was going on around, which is something like a naturalist's watchfulness of the animals he studies; but has this advantage over the naturalist, that it comes, so to speak, by instinct, and that the student to

whom this special class of perceptions has been given, sees everything, without being aware that he is carrying on any investigation at all.

A few years passed after the Crimea in professional work of no special importance; but in 1860 he went to China, where so great an undertaking lay before him—not, however, with any prevision of this undertaking, but in the ordinary course of his duty. He was present at the famous capture of the Summer Palace—the plunder of which he speaks of with reprobation, though it would not seem that he entirely refrained from taking part in it. After the war, he was for some time occupied in the more peaceful work of surveying, and while engaged in this, saw enough of the remorseless cruelty of the rebels—the Taipings, who were then keeping the Celestial nation in unrest—to fill his mind with pity and indignation. “Words could not depict the horrors the people suffer from the rebels,” he says, after describing the hosts who took refuge in Shanghai, “or the utter desert they have made of this rich province.” It is no part of our intention to tell over again the story of that rebellion, with its curious foundation of semi-religion, and the *faux air* of Christianity given by some phrases picked up by its founder, which attracted to it in the beginning a sympathy which it does not seem to have deserved. In the year 1863 the Chinese authorities applied to the British, still lingering in China, for a commander for their army, the Ever-Victorious so-called, though not with so much truth as might have been desired. Gordon was the man selected for this office. He had never as yet held any command, but he had attracted

the attention of his superiors by that supreme faculty of knowing what the enemy were about, and what he himself meant to do in opposition to them, which more than anything else constitutes military genius. He was in the prime of young manhood, a little over thirty, and ready for anything that might befall. A faint apprehension that the people at home might be “much vexed” to hear of him as the head of a heathen army seems to have been his sole alarm. But he begs his mother not to fret over it, promising that “I will obey your and my father’s wishes, and endeavour to remain as short a time as possible”; and adding that “I think I am doing a good service.” The Ever-Victorious Army was a strange one, and made up of curious ingredients: the officers were of many different nationalities—Englishmen, Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, and Spaniards. The men were dressed up in a hybrid foreign uniform, so that their countrymen, accustomed to speak of the English and French soldiers as “Foreign Devils,” dubbed them, with native humour, “Imitation Foreign Devils.” They had been accustomed to all the licence of medieval mercenaries—irregularly paid, with a right to sack and plunder, and a gratuity given them when they made a capture. This Gordon reduced to the less picturesque but more satisfactory *régime* of regular pay and strict discipline. Those incidents in the story which show how the young commander acquired the singular power which he had over this wild horde, are of more interest to us than the taking of town after town. On the eve of an expedition, for instance, his officers struck almost to a man. He had raised one of them over the heads of the others,

appointing him lieutenant-colonel, and the whole staff felt itself aggrieved. With the conviction, no doubt, that they had the unwary general at their mercy, they sent in their resignations, requesting, however, with a show of magnanimity, that they might be allowed to serve on the expedition as private individuals. Gordon, ever prompt, at once accepted their resignations, but declined their services. They held out till morning came, and the marching orders were given; and for a moment, save Gordon's body-guard, no one would move. But by this time his calm and determination had overawed the rebels, and they gave in without another word, seeing that nothing was to be made by resistance.

On another occasion it was the lower ranks who were disaffected. "The artillery refused to fall in, and threatened to blow the European officers to pieces with the big guns, and the Chinese with small ones."

"This intimation of serious mutiny was conveyed to Gordon in a written proclamation. He ordered up the non-commissioned officers, being convinced that they were at the bottom of the affair, and asked who wrote the proclamation, and why the men would not fall in. They professed ignorance on both points, and were then told that one in every five would be shot, an announcement which they received with groans. As it was absolutely necessary to preserve discipline, the commander ordered a corporal, one of the most prominent of the groaners, to be dragged out and shot, which was immediately done by two of the infantry standing by. The remaining non-commissioned officers were then put into confinement for one hour, with the assurance that within that time, if the men did not fall in, and if the name of the writer of the proclamation was not given up, the arrangement of shooting every fifth man

would be carried out; and this energetic measure brought them to their senses, the men falling in and the writer's name being disclosed."

Strong measures such as these require a strong hand to enforce them, and were no doubt very necessary for the establishment of the commandant's authority over such a half-savage band. But Gordon was magnanimous in all his ways. When the offenders returned to their duty, he remembered their offences no more, took no vengeance, but acted towards them as if there never had been any interruption of confidence.

"In almost all their engagements Gordon found it necessary to be constantly in the front and often to lead in person. The officers of his force were brave men enough, but were not always ready to face their desperate antagonists. Gordon, in his mild way, would take one or other of them by the arm, and lead him into the thick of the fire. He always went unarmed himself, even when foremost in the breach. He never recognised danger; to him a shower of bullets was no more than a hailstorm. He carried no weapon to direct his troops,—he had but a little cane, and this soon won for itself the name of Gordon's magic wand of victory. His Chinese followers, seeing him always victorious, always foremost in the fight, concluded it was his wand which ensured him protection. The idea encouraged the Ever-Victorious Army greatly, and was of more service to the young commander than all the arms he could have borne."

The largest and most important operation in this war was the taking of the great city of Soochow, in which the so-called kings or *Wangs* (it is curious to note what a ridiculous aspect the Chinese monosyllables give to all their titles), the chiefs of the rebel army, were collected together. Gordon had entered into negotiations with them, and pledged himself to a

certain extent for their safety; but after the city was taken, he found to his horror that, in spite of his promise and well-known principles of mercy, these men, ten in number, had been beheaded. Gordon's grief and rage were boundless. He withdrew himself and his army from active service for some time, feeling it impossible to act in concert with the Governor, who had, as in the heat of the moment it appeared, betrayed him, and made him appear a party to this murder; and he refused indignantly the reward, a large sum of money, which was sent to him for the capture of the town. The story of this incident—which at the time exposed Gordon's own life to the greatest danger, as he had placed himself unarmed in the power of the adherents of the murdered chiefs, having no suspicion of the vengeance wreaked upon them—is full of interest and excitement. The reader will enter with warmth into the sensations of indignation and distress with which a man so merciful, so honourable, bound by his word as by a hundred bonds, learned the cruel fate which had fallen upon those who trusted him. But at the same time, the Chinese Governor and General were not without justification. The story, as given by Mr Hake, of Gordon's refusal of the reward offered to him, is comical. The bearers of the gift—10,000 *tael*, amounting to between three and four thousand pounds—entered dramatically the General's presence, "with bowls of bullion on their heads, like a train from the Arabian Nights." The hot-tempered hero, sore and sorry, disgusted with the whole business, started up with his usual contempt for conventionalities, and "flogged them from the chamber with his magic wand." The little cane, the unpretending baton that

had so often led to victory, was now in his hand like his Master's whip of small cords, the emblem of that hot severity of the tender-hearted, which is at once full of pathos and humour, of indignant disdain yet pity.

Gordon lay in his tents like a nobler Achilles, sullen and sad, for two months or more,—all his operations suspended, his heart full of disgust and discouragement. But inaction brings out the evils of every army, even the best; and to his half-disciplined and half-savage soldiers the evils of the pause were soon apparent, while, on the other hand, the half-suppressed rebellion began anew. The reader who cares to go through all the details of this history will find it admirably told in the late Mr Andrew Wilson's account of the Ever-Victorious Army—which, as it is less bent upon the glorification of Gordon than the story of Mr Hake, is more effectual perhaps in its praise. Mr Wilson relates in a few sentences the painful results of this arrested activity,—the quarrels of the officers, the licence of the wandering European vagabonds who haunt the outskirts of every such conflict; the temptations to which the soldiers were exposed to break away, and perhaps even take service, where booty and licence were to be found, with the rebels. No feeling of his own had ever been put before duty in the mind of our General. He saw his work endangered, and he forgot his personal woes and wrongs. The campaign that followed was a difficult and dangerous one, not without disaster, but ended at length in complete victory. The only time he was himself wounded, Gordon stood till he fainted from loss of blood, then directed the proceedings from a boat, in which, able to stand

no longer, he could lie down and give his orders from his couch—a general in bed, but indomitable.

When the rebellion was effectually quelled, he had another piece of work to do of scarcely less importance to China. This was to disband the irregular army, which he alone, according to all appearances, could have controlled and guided. "A more turbulent set of men have not often been collected together, or a more dangerous lot if they had been headed by one of their own style," he says of the officers over whom—but not without much trouble and anxiety—he had gained complete authority. He, who took nothing for himself, was in all the better position for securing a provision which would make them harmless for this cosmopolitan band. And he destroyed one more danger for China when he got the men scattered to their homes, each with his reward. The General alone remained a poorer man than when he entered this service. He had spent everything he could lay his hands on in perfecting his troops and in helping the distressed around, and came home, poor, famous, and rejoicing, with "a yellow riding-jacket, a peacock's feather to be worn in his cap, and four suits of uniform proper to his rank of *Ti-tu*—the highest rank in the Chinese army," for all his reward. "The yellow jacket and the peacock's feather are Chinese equivalents for the Garter and the Bath," says Mr Hake, doing his utmost to take them seriously. One can imagine Gordon's glee over his title of *Ti-tu*; but he brings home the finery, for "I know you and my father will like them," he says. And it is easy to imagine with what tender triumph, with what laughter full of tears, the father

and mother would spread out all these oriental trophies, the stiff golden embroideries and brocades, which were all their gallant son brought home from the wars. All: except the name, finer than any flowery title, of Chinese Gordon—by which he was henceforward to be distinguished, not only in that trifling little society which we call the world, but over the real universe, of all nations and languages. He had spent altogether about four years in China; but his service as general of the not always victorious army had lasted little more than one year.

He left China amid the grateful applauses of all, even of the rebels against whom he had fought. The merchants of Shanghai expressed their thanks in an address; the Prime Minister of the Empire went to the British envoy in person to ask that something might be done for the man who would accept no recompense from China. But he went home a simple British officer as he had gone out, receiving at home for all recompense a step, which was something in the slow promotion of the Engineer corps; and after a while an appointment, in the natural course of affairs, at Gravesend:—that is, he descended from a generalship, from absolute power, high pay and influence unbounded—to be what he might equally well have been had he never left the British shores. When he presented himself at the War Office, some months later, "the Minister seemed hardly to have heard of his name, and to know nothing whatever of his successes." This, however, was a treatment to which Gordon had no objection. He disliked being invited to dinner-parties and made a lion of. His soul was impatient of vapid praise; and he made no pretence of liking it, or effort to support it; but ne-

glect was wholesome and honest, and left him to his own development. At home he told his wonderful story, to the delight and amazement of his own people; but outside that charmed circle, preferred to be simple Colonel Gordon of the Engineers, a man no more remarkable than his fellows. It was not in him, however, to be unremarkable. His life at Gravesend is perhaps one of the greatest episodes in his career, though he had no armies to lead, no rebels to subdue, and nothing but peaceful work to employ his powers. The day's work, which is enough for most men, was to him not half enough; but there was the poor, who are always with us, and a multitude of boys about, children of the mud, ragged in soul and body, the pitiful little creatures in whom there was yet a soul to be saved, a life to be made something or nothing of. His heart went forth to these poor waifs, who were nobody's children. "My kings" he called them. It was not charity, but the tender affectionateness of one who finds his own wherever he sees an abandoned scrap of humanity, that dictated such a name, like a father's fond mockery of his boys, who are as the apple of his eye. Love, and fun, and compassion, and tender interest, and delightful humour, are in the tale. He gathered them round him, fed them, laughed at them, prayed for them, and loved and was proud of the souls he rescued. The maps on his walls were stuck with pins, as our maps of the Soudan were a little while ago. What did they mean? That here and there, all over the wide seas, were ships sailing in which was a cabin-boy or rough little apprentice whose name was in Gordon's prayers, and whose place was in Gordon's heart. He moved these little posts of memory as the sails

moved round the world. So a mother might do who had her boys all afloat. He was a young man, not much over thirty, with the world at his foot, society open to him, and life offering him, if not the honour he deserved, yet at least all her pleasures. And this was what he took of all that youth and happiness offered—the right to do good, the power to save.

"Many of the dying sent for him in preference to the clergy," says one of the many who come in with full hearts to swell the torrent of praise. "But he would never take the chair at a religious meeting." He understood the poor, and they him, which is the gift of rare spirits. Though he was ready to listen to every one and sent no applicant away, he was seldom taken in, which is so often unfortunately the condition of the rest of us in our intermitting efforts. "He had an eye that saw through and through people"—detecting the lie in a beggar's tale, as in the loud-voiced pretences of the mutineer. And why should any one try to deceive him who despaired of nobody—who had a helping hand for the worst, and was ready, like the father of the prodigal, to meet any returning soul? He worked six years in Gravesend, humbly fortifying the muddy banks of the Thames, picking up out of that mud the perishing, and finding his little kings, the joy of his heart, in their rags and squalor, in every dirty alley. After all his grandeur, his barbaric pearl and gold, his peacocks' feathers and princely state, it looked a poor thing enough to send him to that muddy reach of the Thames, to the journeyman work of his profession; but it was one of the happiest times of his life; and it is a pleasure to think that after so many attempts at a fit memorial to him,

the public choice has at last fixed upon this, the most appropriate monument—the work of saving the wasted children who were the objects of his fondest hopes.

He was sent after this, from the place where he had made himself memorable by “the most exquisite charity” (for he made even the newspapers eloquent, and this is what one of them said of him),—where, does the reader think?—to some of the dark places on the surface of the earth, where there was need of a true man? Not so. The Minister at the War Office, we must remember, looked as if he had scarcely heard of him, and knew nothing about his doings,—perhaps wondering what in the world this sapper and miner had done to be called Chinese Gordon, of all things. No; but he was sent—as good Colonel Smith or worthy Captain Jones might have been—as Commissioner to the Danube, to see about the state of that river and improve the channels at its mouth. It is a sad drawback to the establishment of the Hero as a power, and the promotion of the Man who can do, according to Carlyle’s formula, to the first place in the world, that it is so hard for his contemporaries to identify that Man who Can. Here was one whose personal influence was of the strongest, who had all the qualities of a ruler of men, purified by the most absolute disinterestedness and generosity; yet in the service of his own country he did nothing but survey and measure; and only in the ends of the world, by the grotesque intelligence of the Chinese, and among the wild tribes of the African deserts, had he a chance of fulfilling the commission that heaven had given him. Could anything be more strange? As a matter of fact, from the time when he served

as a boy in the trenches before Sebastopol, to the ill-omened moment when he left Charing Cross at a few hours’ notice to help the British Government out of their difficulties, he never had been trusted by that Government with any work above that of an honest surveyor. And yet there had been work to do which would have been worthy of him, and which smaller men had to toil under and struggle through.

He was for two years poking about the slime of the Danube, as he had done in the Thames mud; but at the end of that time a more befitting work offered itself in Africa, which the English Government graciously permitted the soldier for whom it had no occupation to accept. One would think they were glad to get rid of him, though he does not seem ever to have exercised the better man’s privilege of criticism, or uttered a single complaint. So far as appears, he complained of nothing except dinner-parties and the too-much attention which misguided individuals would insist on showing him. Successive Governments gave him no trouble in this way, and he had gone from one piece of routine work to another with cheerful simplicity. But there was at that time in Egypt need for an officer of his adventurous kind, careless of danger and of self-interest.

The Governorship of the Equatorial Provinces—a post just relinquished by Sir Samuel Baker, after very hard and temporarily successful work: work which had to be done over again, as the ablest pioneer work always has to be—was that to which Gordon was appointed. The title sounded fine and the position important; but it was in reality something like the exploration and settlement of a savage and hostile country, some

portion of it newly, and little more than nominally, added to Egypt, and in which the slave-trade was the only industry, and a few scattered, unsupported officials, feeble if not dishonest, the only authorities known—which was put into his hands. The Khedive was well aware that to describe the work as a crusade against the slave-trade was the readiest way of securing British sympathy; but for the first arduous years Gordon was in no position to attack the slave-traders, and could only secure, by infinite toil and suffering, the establishment of a line of posts far up along the deadly swamps and jungle of the Nile. It is this most difficult undertaking which is described in the first part of his 'Journals in Central Africa,' edited by Dr Birkbeck Hill—a narrative full of interest and character, and in which the man, with all his noble qualities, with all his eccentricities, his profound and tender sympathy with suffering, his impatience, his hot temper, his inexhaustible charity, stands fully forth, a revelation to the world. In this unaffected and often entrancing story, far better than in the compilations of Mr Egmont Hake, the reader will learn what manner of man Chinese Gordon was.

His first mission began, as his last ended, at Khartoum. This was the starting-point, his province lying up the river as far as the Lakes Victoria and Albert Nyanza, of which so much and so little has been learned. He had a wretched little troop of Egyptian soldiers with him, a few young Englishmen, who all died on the terrible road, and one Italian, Gessi, who proved a most able and faithful lieutenant. We watch him pushing on from day to day along the bank of the mysterious river, through difficulties of nature almost

insurmountable—through native populations fiercely resistant, wanting none of the new rule and new laws he brings; meeting now and then a caravan of slaves, whom at first it seems simple enough to release and let go; picking up a wretched straggler on the road to nurse and console; sometimes arrested in his course, and compelled to wait and linger among the swamps; sometimes surrounded by savages whom his little army does not dare to face: ill now and then, and overwhelmed with despondency, but next day up again and to the front, determined to carry through his work, whatever it may cost. All kinds of wild picturesque scenes occur as he pushes on, and his reflections upon them are always original, often most quaint and unexpected, full of humour and feeling. Once he sees a man on a height, evidently making incantations, gesticulating to all quarters with a great deal of solemn earnestness; and he thinks of Balak and Balaam, "Come, curse me this people," and is by no means sure that his opponent's prayers are not heard. "Somehow," he says, "I had some thought of misgiving on account of them. It was odd this repulse was so soon to follow. These prayers were earnest prayers for celestial aid, in which the prayer knew he would need help from some unknown power to avert a danger near." This is perhaps the first time on record when the enemy's appeal to the God of battles has been regarded by a general as quite as likely to be heard as his own. "I can quite enter into these poor people's misery," he adds, "'We do not want beads, we do not want to see the Pasha' (I am sure I do not want to see them!); 'we want our own lands, and you to go away.'" And this

reasonable invader is by no means sure that he is not himself a representative of tyranny, whose destruction they have a right to pray for. He has to remind himself that it is for their own protection, to interpose some possibility of help between them and the slave-dealers, as he pushes on. Now and then, but not till the last moment, he has to "lift" their cows, which is the only means of subduing them. "A native shouted to one of my officers, 'Now if you take those cows I am a woman; if you do not you are a woman.'" Sometimes his distresses, though most real, are comical. "Oh dear, what a people to slave for! *They never have a knife, nor a hammer, nor a bit of yarn*, nor anything of the sort; they have not the least idea of preventing a rope running out too rapidly; they do not know one hill from another." A man with every faculty at the highest tension surrounded by incapables — incapables, too, who dare not fight, who drag a helpless collection of women and children after them through the stinging grass and murderous swamps; but all the while, as quickly as the intolerable road will permit, he pushes on, establishing station after station—half mad to hear that an officer at the head of one now and then steals cows on his own account, or takes bribes from the slave-dealers; that the sentries everywhere sleep at their posts; and that there is not a man trustworthy.

After all these miseries, which sometimes are almost more than he can bear, when the lakes are within reach, he protests that he will not explore them. "I declare that I do not care whether there are two lakes or a million, or whether the Nile has a source or not," he exclaims with

whimsical passion. "Of course the Khedive, the Royal Geographical Society, and the world in general, will be much angered with me for not going on the lake; but I cannot do it, and do not see why I should suffer so much to satisfy the curiosity of men I do not know." He did go, however, notwithstanding this resolution, pushing on through forests of grass six feet high, in which no one could tell what spears might be lurking, and where the seed-pods had hooks and caught and stung. "I am in rags from the thorn-bushes. The elephants uproot the trees and leave them in the path; around the fallen trees grows up a fearful jungle. Marsh water along the road, for the river is unapproachable for the marshes which border it." "I am nearly dead," he says a little later; "to map the river for eight or ten miles I have had to walk in pouring rain through jungle some eighteen miles: but it is done at any rate, and I am quite sure no one will ever do it again." At Masindi, near the end of his tremendous expedition, he heard the drums and horns of the savage enemy all around, and feared that they were closing round his little faint-hearted company, with "a pain in his heart" which he recalls from time to time in the most dreadful moments of his life, and feels once more. But at the end the work was done. From Berber to the Victoria Nyanza, with two little gaps much regretted, the whole course of the Nile was surveyed and mapped, and a chain of posts established. The moral effect of his mission was still more important; for whereas when he came no one could move without an escort half-an-hour out of the miserable little mud capital at Gondokoro, there were now relations more or less friendly established all along the route, and

a possibility of restraint and succour over all the dark and suffering land.

At the end of the third year of this work—for the time it took was enormous—Gordon went to Cairo with the intention of giving up his command, having everything to complain of,—his useless troops, his treacherous officers, and, above all, the constant thwarting of his plans by the governor of the Soudan, through whom all supplies and reinforcements had to come. The Khedive, however, was unwilling to part with a man who had done so much, and anxious to do everything to retain him, so that instead of being allowed to resign, he was appointed to a much greater command—the governorship of the Soudan being added to his previous charge, and his enemy removed. Hard as his work had been on the Upper Nile, it was a much more overwhelming responsibility that was laid upon his shoulders now,—nothing less than the charge of putting down the slave-trade in a country of which it was the very inspiration, and of settling more or less the numerous and bewildering questions involved in it, which are so seldom taken into consideration by philanthropists, at a distance, but which Gordon had to face at first hand and solve as it was possible. We have been accustomed to think of him in this portion of his career as a sort of more powerful Don Quixote, a crusading knight carrying freedom wherever he went, striking off chains and letting the captives go free; and so he was. But either the complications grow with the ages, and that which was easy in primitive times becomes all but impossible as civilisation—as often a destroying as an improving influence—goes on; or else we have

managed to ignore, being so far off, the appalling difficulties that attend the question. They have perhaps never been so clearly set before the world as in this journal. Not to take into account the difficulties already fully known,—his craven troops, who never dared to face a determined enemy, and the perpetual treachery going on, his own officers helping, conniving at, concealing the passage of the caravans, and accepting bribes right and left,—there were the slaves themselves by hundreds, sometimes by thousands, left in his hands in the middle of the desert, a return to their homes impossible, all independent settlement impossible, and some way of protecting, feeding, finding feasible conditions of life for them, having to be decided upon in a moment, without time to reflect, or counsellor to advise. In such circumstances, no man in his senses could be a fanatical emancipationist; much less Gordon, who was fanatic in nothing, who thought a good Mussulman as good a Christian as himself, and believed that all mankind were God's children. To show with what temper and anticipations he set out on his great work, we may quote the following passage:—

“You have little idea of the great difficulty, and the many questions involved in it—viz., in domestic slavery. First I have to disband some 6000 Turks and Bashi-Bazouks, who are the frontier guards, and who must be replaced, for they let the caravans pass. You might as well order the sea to stop the caravans as these men. Now think of disbanding suddenly 6000 men. You must do it neatly, you must see to replace them with trustworthy men. Let me ask who that had not the Almighty with him could do that? I have the Almighty with me, and I will do it. Second, consider the effect of harsh measures among an essentially Mussulman population, carried out brusquely by a

Nazarene—measures which touch the pocket of every one. Who that had not the Almighty with him would dare to do that? I will do it: for I value my life as naught, and should only leave much weariness for perfect peace. No man ever had a harder task than I unaided have before me; but it sits as a feather on me. As Solomon asked, I ask for wisdom to govern this great people; and not only will He give me it, but all else besides. And why? because I value not the 'all besides.' I am quite as averse to slavery, and more so, than most people. I show it by sacrificing myself in coming here, which is no paradise. I have naught to gain in name or riches. I do what I think is pleasing to my God; and so far as man goes, I need nothing from any one. The Khedive had never directly gained any revenue from slaves. I now hold his place here; and I who am on the spot with unlimited power, am able to judge how impotent he at Cairo is to stop the slave-trade. I can do it with God's help, and I have the conviction He has destined me to do it; for it was much against my will I came here again. What I have to do is so to settle matters that I do not cause a revolution on my own death,—not that I value life; I have done with its comforts in coming here. My work is great, but does not weigh me down. I go on as straight as I can. I feel my own weakness, and look to Him who is Almighty, and I leave the issue without inordinate care to Him. I expect to ride 5000 miles this year, if I am spared. I am quite alone, and like it. I have become what people call a great fatalist—viz., I trust God will pull me through every difficulty. The solitary grandeur of the desert makes one feel how vain is the effort of man."

We have no space here to enter into the details of the scheme by which he hoped to accomplish his great aim; but even that did not throw any light on the more urgent question what to do with the chained throngs whom he surprised in the desert, or took from a robber's stronghold. "What am I to

do with them?" he cries; "I cannot take them back to their own country. I cannot feed them. Solve the problem for me."

"I must let them be taken by my auxiliaries, or by my soldiers, or by the merchants; there is no help for it. If I let them loose, they will be picked up in every direction; for an escaped slave is like an escaped sheep—the property of him who saves him or her. One must consider what is best for the individual himself, not what may seem best to the judgment of Europe. It is the slave who suffers, not Europe. . . . It makes one wink to think how on earth the slaves of all these Bedouin tribes are to be freed in twelve years. Who will free them? Will Great Britain? When the trees hear my voice and obey me, then will the tribes liberate their slaves. The only thing that Government can do is to prevent their getting new ones."

It was with this intention that Gordon set out from Khartoum a few months after his arrival. To see him once more setting out upon his journeys, is like taking the road again in one's own person. He goes on talking, telling us everything, in a free, natural, continually varied monologue, full of the thoughts of a solitary traveller, full of reflections, observations, descriptions. He is no longer tramping through the tall grass, wading across the marshes: the Nile disappears from the landscape. He is in the veritable desert, upon his camel, where all is silence, giving full room for thought. "I am now accustomed to the camel," he says; "it is a wonderful creature, and so comfortable, with its soft, cushion-like tread. The camels and the Gordons are of the same race," he adds, with the careless humour that breaks in so often, making the long way shorter. "Let them take an idea into their heads, and nothing will take it out." His

own beast is (naturally) swifter than all the rest. "I have a splendid camel—none like it; it flies along, and quite astonishes even the Arabs. It is fearful to see the Governor-General, arrayed in gold clothes, flying along like a madman, with only a guide, as if he were pursued." As he goes from place to place, he is constantly taking the people by surprise. At the very crisis of the campaign he heard that the slave-traders, with about six thousand men, were encamped near Dara, where there was a feeble force. "I am obliged to go there at once," he says; and riding eighty-five miles in a day and a half, stretching far ahead of his followers, he reaches the town alone, to the consternation of the inhabitants. "I came on my people like a thunderbolt. As soon as they had recovered, the salute was fired. My poor escort! Where is it? Imagine to yourself a single, dirty, red-faced man, on a camel ornamented with flies, arriving in the divan all of a sudden. The people were paralysed, and could not believe their eyes."

This strange and unexpected daring had the greatest effect upon the imagination of the people, which Gordon began to take possession of, so to speak, body and soul. The fearless solitary rider, trusting himself alone to all the chances of the desert, was beyond the comprehension of the mass of petty tyrants and abject sufferers who made up the population. The ride to Dara was to encounter, at the head of his forces, Suleiman, the son of the well known Zebehr Pasha, long the head of the slave-traders—a princely robber, something like a dictator in the Soudan, who had treated with the Khedive almost on equal terms. Zebehr was now in Cairo in a kind of hon-

ourable restraint, but Suleiman was still at the head of a power almost unbroken. Gordon rode into the hostile encampment of this young chief almost as he had ridden into Dara, and "dumb-founded" the chiefs by calling them into council, and propounding his views to them, and his purpose: "that I would disarm them and break them up," he says calmly—a pleasant proposal from an unarmed man. He accepted with the same extraordinary calm an invitation from Suleiman to visit him in his robber's den. There the Governor went as a guest, with his few wretched Egyptians, taking no precautions, his life in his hands. The chiefs had planned to seize and murder him; but there was something in the keen blue eyes of the English soldier, looking through and through them, that took the hearts out of the savages. Instead of falling upon him and killing him, as they might have done, they took sullen counsel together, and, overawed by his personal power, without a blow struck, gave in their submission. Thus, what seemed for a time the subjugation of the slave-dealers was carried out, after a campaign of six months, though with but little confidence on the part of Gordon that the settlement was final. And this proved to be the case. Suleiman got head again when Gordon's presence was withdrawn, and was only painfully hunted down two years after by Gessi, after many encounters. He was shot, with his principal supporters, by Gessi's orders,—no doubt a necessary but severe measure, and one which established a fatal feud between Gordon and the father Zebehr.

The confused and troubled history, of which we can give only this hasty abstract, has been traced

again and again in recent days. What is more interesting to us is the figure of the commander as he unfolds himself day by day. "These interminable deserts and arid mountains fill the heart with far different thoughts than civilised lands would do. It is for this that the Israelites were led through them," he says. "The quiet of the desert is something wonderful—you never hear a sound." "So on one goes, stalking along—the camel's cushioned foot makes no noise, *and you learn yourself.*" The silence enters into his soul: over and over again he speaks of this cushioned foot, till we seem to hear the breathless silence, the hot calm, the soft rush of the noiseless tread—and see the lonely rider musing, his watchful eyes unconsciously observing everything, his mind discussing, calculating, trying one expedient after another, flitting off to a hundred other subjects, rising to the highest meditations of God and life divine, then returning with an ever stronger sweep of thought to the one thing which is his problem, which God has given him to solve, what to do with his slaves? He comes back to this continually, amid all the variations, swift and easy and manifold, the natural ebbs and flowings of thought. What to do with his slaves? When he gets on the route of the caravans, the scattered skulls on the roadside give dreadful token of the misery and destruction that tracks their path. Sometimes he suddenly falls upon a miserable convoy, half dead with fatigue and hard usage, half mad with thirst, yet not always willing to be liberated. Now and then the victims are still within reach of their own or a kindred tribe, and then the work of restoration is easy; but when they have come for hundreds of miles from the equatorial wastes,

what is to be done? To the anti-slavery societies it is all simple; but here in Africa, where it is the question of every day, it is not so easy. Sometimes Gordon is in despair, tempted to throw down his commission and abandon the effort; but to turn his back on his work is not a thing that it is in him to do. And amid all these miseries and preoccupations he has still one unfailing comfort: his heart escapes now and then like a bird into the ineffable celestial air, into the prevailing thought that is always with him, of the life that is hid in Christ, and of that indwelling of God in his servants which is his favourite contemplation. Besides Gordon there is another undisclosed personality in these journals—the individual to whom they are addressed. We have no right to suggest who it is whose sympathy is so entirely relied on, to whom everything is told, the highest and the lowest, addressing whom Gordon speaks of himself as "your brother," setting forth all his own foibles as members of a family only can do to each other—those well-known faults which are almost as dear as virtues to the domestic judge so far away. There is nothing too high in his meditations—nothing too familiar in the details of his life to be opened up to this confidant. It is heartrending to think, when these journals failed, when the desert no longer gave forth the accustomed record, so intimate, so detailed, containing everything that even an anxious woman could desire to know, what a void must have been left in the first reader's life and heart.

The excitement, the fatigue, the perpetual risks, the universal treachery, the dreadful sights that met his eyes, all confused and aggravated by that problem about

the slaves, which he never solved, even when he finally extirpated the slave-holders and broke up their dens, would have worn out any one less indomitable. But Gordon's constitution was iron, and his spirit a clear-burning unwavering light, which it was not in the reach of all the powers of darkness to quench. The three years of his second engagement were nearly out when his work was accomplished. And at the same time the crisis of Egyptian politics had arrived, and Ismail Pasha, who was Gordon's Khedive, who had backed him up with wonderful faithfulness, and understood him, and for whose sake he had stifled his own longings after home and rest, was deposed, and Tewfik placed in his stead. Gordon arrived in Cairo in August 1879,—“very cross at the dismissal of Ismail,” and no longer in favour with the authorities, although the new Khedive, after a while at least, seems to have been friendly enough. “He told me that he had terrible complaints against me; at which I laughed, and he did also.” It is unnecessary to linger over his mission to Abyssinia, in which he seems to have been once more in danger of his life in the Khedive's service. He came home in the beginning of 1880, having been six years in Egypt. It is equally unnecessary to enter into the curious little episode of his acceptance of the post of secretary to Lord Ripon,—a strange blunder to have occurred in such a life, and which really meant nothing more than a journey out to Bombay and back again—actuated by what mistaken ideas or motives we have no means of knowing. What is much more interesting is the momentary renewing of his old ties with China,—a charming incident, which it is pleasant to record. As he was

leaving India, a telegram reached him from Shanghai, beseeching him to “come and see for yourself—work, position, conditions can all be arranged to your satisfaction.” His answer was concise and instantaneous. “Gordon will leave for Shanghai first opportunity,—as for conditions, Gordon indifferent.” He went not without opposition from the British military authorities, it being supposed that he was about to head another Ever-Victorious Army, perhaps against Russia, with whom the relations of China were then in a very strained condition. But it was peace and not war that Gordon sought. The “conditions” had always been a matter of supreme indifference to him. He had cut down his own income from £6000 to £3000 a-year to save the Khedive's money, and it was not likely that he would take the wrong side now to secure himself an appointment. “With only a small degree of admiration for military exploits,” he says, “I esteem it a far greater honour to promote peace than to gain any paltry honours in a wretched war.” Mr Hake tells us that his influence when he arrived was decisive. His old friend Li, now advanced to the highest positions in the Empire, was struggling in the interests of peace with another potentate named Tso, almost as great as himself, who wanted war. It is difficult to take the magnates seriously who are represented by those monosyllables. And it is still more difficult to take seriously the letter or memorandum which Gordon left for the guidance of his friends,—“a state paper of the highest importance,” according to Mr Hake, and “perhaps—the true beginning of the regeneration of China.” It is very simple and straightforward, but it is almost impossible to read

the following instructions without a smile :—

"China should never attack forts. She ought to wait and starve her foes out, and worry them night and day. China should have a few small-bored very long-range wall-pieces, rifles, and breechloaders. They are light to carry, and if placed a long way off, will be safe from attack. If the enemy comes out to take them, the Chinese can run away; and if the enemy takes one or two, it is no loss. Firing them into the enemy's camp a long way off would prevent the enemy sleeping; and if he does not sleep, then he gets ill, and goes into hospital, and needs other enemies to take care of him, and thus the enemies' number is reduced. When an enemy comes up and breaks the wall of the city, the Chinese soldiers ought not to stay and fight the enemy, but to go out and attack the trains of baggage in the rear, and worry him on the road he came by. By keeping the Chinese troops lightly loaded with baggage, with no guns, they can move two to every one *li* the enemy marches. To-day the Chinese will be before him; to-morrow they will be behind him; the next day they will be on his left hand; and so on, till the enemy gets tired and cross with such long walks, and his soldiers quarrel with their officers and get sick. . . . If torpedoes are only used at certain places, then the enemy knows that he has to look out when near those places: but when every place may have torpedoes he can never feel safe; he is always anxious; he cannot sleep; he gets ill, and dies. The fact of an enemy living in constant dread of being blown up is much more advantageous to China than if she blew up one of her enemies, for anxiety makes people ill and cross."

If there was no perception of the humour of those suggestions in Gordon's mind when he wrote them (though no doubt he wrote in perfect good faith), his mind must have been less accessible to a laugh at this easy moment than amid all the disasters of Khartoum. It is with admirable good sense

and judgment, however, without either false modesty or the shadow of any consciousness of self-interest, that he adds :—

"Remember, with this programme, China wants no big officers from Foreign powers. I say big officers, because I am a big officer in China. If I stayed in China it would be bad for China, because it would vex the American, French, and German Governments, who would want to send their officers. Besides, I am not wanted. China can do what I recommend herself. If she cannot, I could do no good."

It was with these words that Chinese Gordon left the country in which he had won his early fame. He spoke as to a child-nation, with the simplicity and reiteration which a child requires. It is to be supposed that the directions which make us smile were simple and natural to the intelligence of the Celestial empire. They were followed to the letter, Mr Hake tells us.

After this, Gordon had one little piece of work to do for England—the only one since the days of surveying. He was sent to Basutoland, where the position was "grave." But his methods were not those of the authorities there. He examined, and reported, and advised; but his advice was taken no notice of. Very probably it was not in accordance with Colonial etiquette, or couched in the proper forms. Three or four times he submitted memoranda to the Government, which received no attention, nor even the civility of a reply. He was asked to go up into the disturbed districts to examine at first-hand into the state of affairs in the interests of peace. He did so, alone and unarmed, as was his custom; and while he was in Masupha's camp, on this peaceful errand, another tribe, under the

instructions of the Government, attacked it. Finally, he was allowed to resign his commission, Mr Gladstone regretting "to record my conviction that your continuance in the position you occupy would not be conducive to the public interest." We cannot enter into the rights of this question, nor are we prepared to discuss Gordon's conduct in the matter. But it is curious that this check should have occurred for the only time in his life, on the only occasion in which he had the privilege of working for his own country alone.

He went to the Holy Land for his well-earned repose, and there lived in the atmosphere of the great Life which was his inspiration, following day by day the incidents of the sacred story,—tracing out its different scenes, neither in a sentimental nor in a theological way, but with the close professional interest of an Engineer in mapping out and examining the localities. This was his amusement, the solace of his leisure; and meanwhile his musing mind turned over and over the mysteries of faith, as in the desert it had brooded over the problem of the slave. His favourite occupation was to follow out the analogies and possible parallels between events in the natural life and the story of our souls. His "Reflections" are like pages from the work of some old divine in those modern ages of faith which produced the works of Baxter and of Howe, when men had leisure to enter into all the possibilities of interpretation; and a minute exploration of the problematical sacred or spiritual meanings into which a certain passage might be opened up, was received with the devout and anxious attention of many serious souls. "Possible Analogy between the first three

days of Creation and our own lives." "Connection between the Fall of Man and Holy Communion": the relation of the "Thou shalt not eat" of the Garden of Eden to the "Take, eat," of our Lord at His last supper. We turn over the saintly pages with a respect which does not always go so far as sympathy. Perhaps the latter parallel, which to him was so pungent and full of meaning, may strike many as a little fantastic. We do not need to follow step by step the curious reasonings of a mind which had fixed itself with all the force of conviction in this peculiar sphere. No one was more ready than Gordon to allow that faith might exist under other formulas than his—nay, that it might exist without any formulas at all. We give him a tender attention even should our mind stray. Whatever he says is full of the divine love and consciousness, the very breath of holiness and truth. If we cannot follow him, what does it matter? There are some who will follow him, and to whom he will be a leader full of sacred power. The treasury from which he brought that noble faith, that divine charity of his, must have been no less than the stores of Heaven.

Gordon's retreat in Palestine lasted scarcely a year. His intention, when he should leave it, was to return to England to work quietly, as he had done in Gravesend, among the London poor. But this conclusion was not to be. It is unnecessary to go over again the facts, with which we are all so familiar. Gordon had accepted an appointment from the King of Belgium to go to the Congo, when events in the Soudan led the late Government to decide upon the evacuation of that wild province. At the moment when public opin-

ion was most distracted on this subject, and the mind of the Government more distracted still, a certain well-known journal, which had shortly before introduced into English journalism the American custom of interviewing, actuated no doubt by the most patriotic motives, yet not without a prudent eye to an extra edition or two, seized the opportunity of interviewing Gordon at Southampton upon the situation in Egypt; and by the report of this interview, and its comments on the subject, pressed with unprecedented boldness for his instant appointment as the only man equal to the crisis, and by whom a happy issue might be accomplished. It was perhaps a new thing in England that the Ministry should accept the dictates of an able editor. But Government was at its wits' end, and advice so bold and sudden looked like an inspiration. After a moment of wavering, which was inevitable, the resolution was taken. The errors of the wise are among the most extraordinary of mortal errors. Mr Gladstone and his colleagues, it would seem, looked upon Gordon as a sort of spiritual Rarey—a savage-tamer of the same kind as the horse-tamer; one who could whisper in the patient's ear, or wave his magic wand, and all would be well. Badgered by Lord Wolseley on one side and the newspaper agitation on the other, they seem to have said to each other, "Well, then, let the wizard try what he can do." Here is Gordon's own very succinct account of what occurred:—

"Tuesday, stayed with Wolseley in Wolseley's office from 2 to 5 P.M., while he talked to Ministers. Nothing, however, came of it, so I said, 'I will go to Brussels.' I did not see Ministers. I consequently went to

Brussels on Wednesday, and got there Wednesday night. At noon on Thursday I got telegram from Wolseley, saying, 'Come over at once.' So I saw the King, who did not like my going, and left Brussels at 8 P.M., Thursday, reaching London at 6 P.M., Friday. I saw Wolseley at 8. He said nothing was settled, but Ministers would see me at 3.30 P.M. No one knew I had come back. At noon he, Wolseley, came for me and took me to Ministers. He went in and talked to the Ministers, and came back and said, 'Her Majesty's Government want you to understand this,—Government are determined to evacuate Soudan, for they will not guarantee future government. Will you go and do it?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Go in.' I went in and saw them. They said, 'Did Wolseley tell you our orders?' I said, 'Yes.' I said, 'You will not guarantee future government of Soudan, and you wish me to go up and evacuate it now.' They said 'Yes,' and it was over, and I left at 8 P.M. for Calais. Very little passed between us."

It was evidently as the Enchanter—the possessor of occult powers, the Miracle-man, in whom an advanced party scarcely believed—that Gordon received this commission. The mysterious goings and comings of the *entrepreneur*, the brief question and answer exchanged between the dubious group of gentlemen not acquainted with such methods, staring a little with unaccustomed eyes at the hero, and that individual himself, whom Wolseley recommended so strongly, whom the evening journals pressed upon them, who had a kind of bewildering, uncanny reputation—Chinese Gordon, and that sort of romantic stuff,—make up the most curious scene; amusing, indeed, if it were not the first scene of a tragedy. "Well, then, if no better can be, let him try. Let him go and wave his wand. We believe in no wands; but then it is not us but the Sou-

dan that is to be quelled; and they are savages, perhaps, susceptible to such methods. Let the Wizard try." "Very little passed between us." Such a mission was never, perhaps, so given before, nor ever so carried out.

The immediate results seemed to realise that programme. Gordon crossed the Desert like a flash of lightning, and made his way, half-flying, on his camel, up by those fatal links of Nile, past Berber to his capital. And for a time the spell worked. Berber lit up every dingy lamp it could collect in sign of rejoicing, while he snatched there a brief moment of repose. The people flocked to the river's edge when he continued his journey—every village pouring out its inhabitants to meet and welcome the great English Pasha who had once saved the Soudan. He came into Khartoum with his proclamation in his hand, remitting taxes, abolishing whips and tortures, proclaiming over again the old law of freedom. But from the first with a difference. We come here to the only point at which English understanding and sympathy failed Gordon; but we do not think that, for those who have followed this narration, there can be any difficulty in understanding the proclamation. He had been known as the enemy of slavery: he had extinguished the slave-trade by exertions almost more than human: but at all times, persistently, over and over again, Gordon had declared that to abolish slavery in the Soudan was impossible; that all he could do, and that perhaps but temporarily, was to stop the trade. He had questioned heaven and earth on the subject, and had found no reply. What to do with them, how to dispose of them, had

been his nightmare, pursuing him into his dreams—a problem which he could not solve. It was once more temporarily solved for him now, by the overthrow of all he had ever done; and to have stood upon any momentary punctilio of keeping up the forced economy which he had come there to abandon, would have been madness. His sudden demand for Zebehr, the old tyrant of the Soudan, whose power he had himself extirpated, and who was perhaps the only deadly enemy he had in the world, is more difficult to understand. But we are apt to forget here that Gordon had come expressly to reverse his own policy, and to let in his old adversaries. So far as that went he had no choice. His reign and the reign of freedom was over. To enforce its ancient laws, would have been vain. But Zebehr, his enemy, whose power he had overthrown, was, failing himself, the most possible ruler, he thought the only possible ruler,—he who alone could give power and a stable government to the Soudan, reversing Gordon's policy, yet protecting his people. Between himself and this man there could be no friendship; for what could the slayer of Suleiman expect from Suleiman's father? But life or safety mattered not to Gordon, in comparison with protection for his people and the prospect of safety and peace. This was why he asked for Zebehr—Zebehr, after himself the only man who *could*, the man who would probably order Gordon himself for instant execution had he the power, but the only independent agent powerful enough to keep up the machinery of State.

The end of the tragedy of Khartoum is so overwhelming in its interest, that the reader's attention is distracted from the first

acts;¹ and the loss of Colonel Stewart's journal leaves out the most important part of it—the critical time when what was possible at first became impossible, and the hoped-for miracle failed. As a matter of fact, however, the evacuation began at once, on a small scale, on Gordon's arrival, and was carried on until the gradual drawing in of the circle of rebellion effectually closed the route, and made the passage of further fugitives impossible. According to the report from Colonel Duncan, the refugees from the Upper Provinces who passed through Assouan from the time of Gordon's arrival to the 27th May, when further passage became impossible, amounted to over 2000—including men, women, and children. But evacuation, except under the influence of a prevailing terror, amounting to desperation, is not an easy matter, especially when there are hundreds of miles of desert to traverse. The newspapers tell us that 13,000 fugitives have gone from Dongola without any official pressure or desire on the part of the authorities for evacuation. These unfortunates, allies and servants of the departing English, have the Mahdi behind them, who is the most cogent of arguments against delay. But in Khartoum there had arrived a miraculous governor, who had remitted taxes, burnt the kourbashs and the tax-books, thrown open the prisons where so many miserable victims lay without even a charge against them, and proclaimed peace and protection to all: and neither the garrison nor the trading strangers desired to fly. He was himself of

opinion at first that Khartoum was "as safe as Kensington Park," and instead of terror and dismay, the elation and delight of unexpected deliverance was in the rescued town, which apparently believed in the coming of British troops, and perfect security, if not triumph. Gordon evidently shared the elation of this happy moment. There is an ardour in his proclamations, a sense of power, a consciousness of the inestimable advantages which he seemed to all to have come to bestow, in which, certainly, any idea of evacuation is with difficulty discerned. "Know ye that I have come to extricate the Soudan from the difficulties and complications which have befallen it, to establish tranquillity and prevent the shedding of Moslem blood, to secure to the inhabitants their prosperity, their wives and children, and to put a stop to injustice and oppression, which have been the cause of this rebellion." There is something of the exaltation of that fatal assurance and gaiety which comes before doom in these words. Gordon was "fey," or seems so—the exhilaration of that sudden hope which is the light of despair had gone to his head. There was, no doubt, more in it than this—there was policy to get his helpless Egyptians shipped off under the shield of the universal rejoicing, and there was also the high design of that self-effacement, inconceivable to common men, which contemplated the elevation of his enemy, and the salvation of the people through him. But yet the proclamation has a rhythm and swing of power which seems to us nothing less than the intoxication of the soul. He was

¹ The Journals of Major-General C. G. Gordon, C.B., at Khartoum, reprinted from the original MSS. Introduction and Notes by A. Egmont Hake. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co. 1885.

"fey"—for the moment—amid the joy and excitement of his arrival, and the intense delight of abolishing so much misery, and making freedom and happiness possible things once more.

But while he gave way to this on the outside of life, his whole mind was engaged within, in calculations how to fulfil his promises by practicable means. Paper after paper, detailed, elaborate, full of thought, were sent off within the first few days, and as long as the routes were clear and communications open, from the white palace at Khartoum to the authorities at Cairo. It is seldom that we are permitted to see so clearly the two sides of a man's mind who has a whole sensitive population hanging upon him for encouragement and cheerfulness, and on the other hand has to satisfy his masters, to act, not on his own inspiration, but theirs. At the very moment when he has proclaimed peace, assured law and protection, none of which he had any warrant to promise, this is how he communicated with Sir Evelyn Baring at Cairo, to provide for the fulfilment of these promises, though not by his hand:—

"In a previous memorandum, I alluded to the arrival of an epoch when whites, fellaheen troops, civilian employés, women and children of deceased soldiers—in short, the Egyptian element in the Soudan—will be removed; when we shall be face to face with the Soudan administration, and when I must withdraw from the Soudan. I have stated that to withdraw, without being able to place a successor in my seat, would be the signal for general anarchy throughout the country, which, though all Egyptian element was withdrawn, would be a misfortune, and inhuman."

And the only successor whom he believed to be possible was Zebehr. He repeated this on

every occasion with the force of the intensest conviction. Zebehr, who thirsted for his blood—his enemy—the only enemy, so far as is known, whom Gordon had in the world. "Send me Zebehr." To the end of his life, in the midst of all those cheerful utterances of despair which we have yet to look at, he never ceases to repeat this burden. Zebehr would have killed him had he ever found the chance. And what then? It was not Gordon's head, but the Soudan, which was in question—thousands of helpless victims—a whole race, with their towns and tents and villages. His own fate did not trouble him, nor how he was to escape it. The gates of heaven were always open; no need to be particular for night or day. But these sheep, what had they done? This is how he stands, between—not earth and heaven, but—the official world, which will neither comprehend nor help, and the helpless masses whom he cannot abandon, come what may—when we lose sight of him in the spring of 1884. Sir Evelyn Baring, with full knowledge of the circumstances and without excitement, concurred completely in Gordon's desire, and backed his demand. But Lord Granville very politely, in that polished language of the highest society of which he is a master, and chiefly for Gordon's sake, refused Zebehr. And by-and-by, far off in that burning wilderness, the gates of Khartoum closed, and Gordon became invisible, evacuation no longer possible,—nothing else possible except the tardy yet wild rush of an impossible rescue at the end.

Naturally there was an anti-slavery society in arms at once to back up Lord Granville;—Zebehr! a slave-owner, a slave-trader! Heaven forbid that such an expedient should be thought of!

Anarchy, murder, the Mahdi, or whatever wild tyrant of the desert might be able to take command of the position, with the slave-trade rampant—yes; that was inevitable: no anti-slavery society could mend that or prevent it; but Zebehr—never! We thought so, too, in the confusion and bewilderment of our souls; wounded that our Gordon could ask it; wondering, not knowing, what to think; forgetting that while we puzzled, he *knew*. Forgetting, too, that England had renounced her mission, and declared that she would no longer interfere, and that all that Gordon was really commissioned to do was to lead out the rats from the sinking ship, and guide them safely if he could, himself coming last, in the rear to count their tails, as they scurried over the sand-heaps, or scuttled along the water's edge, leaving the slave hunters, the slave tormentors,—the trade which Gordon had spent his strength in destroying, in full possession behind—only not Zebehr, who might have done a little better, who might at least have reigned, which is always something, and saved a form of government, and left the possibility that civilisation and freedom might return.

This was the last we heard of Gordon till the end had come. He disappeared into the darkness while yet the clamour of misapprehension was in the air. The moment never arrived which he had anticipated when the Egyptian element should be withdrawn. At the end of May the unwilling dribble of evacuation was stopped. The Mahdi had crept further and further on. He took Berber; he caught the uncertain desert tribes with the charm of Success—that irresistible argument. The tide of rebellion gradually rose till it sur-

rounded the little centre of civilisation, the white town, with its handful of palms, on its promontory with the great river sweeping half round its walls, with its silly Egyptian garrison, its trading Greeks, its population that could not and would not fly, its few anxious Europeans; and Gordon—their sole hope, their only leader, a man who neither would nor could abandon the helpless.

Suddenly all at once the curtain lifts, and we see him again; but no longer in the exaltation of hope and confidence; no longer with the helm in his hand, and safety possible. It is not now spring but autumn; the year has gone round, lingering, terrible, full of vain hopes, vain plans, unanswered letters, alas! unanswered prayers. His last companions reluctantly have left him, in the hope, also vain, of getting back to the world, and sending him succour. He has been left alone with the silence round him—a silence that can be felt, out of which there never comes a word of help or of cheer. Is he, then, forgotten of all? Has England, in the excitement of her politics, in her many occupations, let it go clean out of her mind that she sent her son into the desert, taking him from his work for her needs? Has God forgotten, Who has left him unsuccoured? But no; Gordon is not made of the paltry stuff which doubts God because he himself does not receive what he wants. He is of the nature of the men—few, glorious, sorrowful—who are capable of serving God for nought, and asking no reason why; so that this last element of despair never touches his composed, courageous soul. For three months he is before us, talking to himself of everything that happens, talking to us in the far distance, to his comrades, to his

friends, to everybody and nobody, to make his history and ease his heart. Outside is the enemy, drawing nearer and nearer; inside a crowd of helpless people to be fed and guarded: on the horizon a possibility that suddenly some day, to-night, against the golden afterglow, to-morrow, in the solemn whitening of the dawn, or perhaps never—who can tell?—a cloud of dust, a movement of shadows, a sudden gleam of a bayonet, may show that all the world has not forgotten,—that England is still coming, and salvation possible.

Aspettare e non venire, says the Italian proverb, is one of the things that kills; but if any one supposes that Gordon on his ramparts, on the roof of his palace, is lost in a wistful watch for the help which may never come, they are much mistaken. From the first to the last it is a cheerful and a busy man who stands there before us, watching the movements of the enemy, guarding against every risk, sending out his precious steamers and his heart with them. He has little time for desponding, for presentiment, or thoughts of what is coming. He knows what is coming; but he has too much to do to dwell upon it. His head is full of plans, of calculations, such as would be of priceless value to the far-off slow-coming rescue, could they but know; of other plans never to be carried out, rapid, manifold, crossing each other like the threads in a loom,—of how, were Zebehr still to come, the future might be shaped for the Soudan; of how he himself might press across the burning wastes to the Congo and the work there; of how the expedition coming should separate, should move unencumbered, a flying column, no guns—a column all made up of Gordons; an imagination easy to

him, who, being Gordon, saw no marvel in him! This was how his thoughts ran. He puts it all down on paper, amusing the weary hours with that imaginary march,—two hundred, that would be enough, skimming over the sand on their camels, to Abou Hamed some, some from Ambukol, in the route which was afterwards taken. The posts they were to establish in the desert were all put down and defended in Gordon's living fancy, before the toiling expedition had done more than touch the Nile. The Nile itself he made into a highway, working out his plan, half engineering, half inspiration. And to think he was shut up there and could do nothing! And then his thoughts would stray to those who had sent him, to those who had abandoned him, to the easy advice and jaunty instructions of the official world,—to Mr Egerton at Cairo, who requested to know what was the last exact moment he could hold out, and desired that if he stayed at Khartoum he should "state his reasons" for doing so,—“as if one were luxuriating up here!” When his mind takes this turn, the soliloquy breaks into ironical banter, into the laughter of the wronged and powerless. He laughs with a glitter in his eyes about the puzzlements of the fussy, distant, unmoved officials. What it must have cost them in telegrams! “There is the town El Obeyd and the Sheikh El Obeyd—Send for Wolseley! Khartoum forces defeated by Sheikh El Obeyd. Why, the town must have moved! Is not El Obeyd the place Hicks went to take? Most extraordinary. Send for Wolseley!” Thus he amuses himself, imagining the confusion of the office: then returns to the more immediate, the still sharper question, the inconceivable calm

of those spectators standing by while he perishes, requesting to know "exactly when he expects to be in difficulties."

"It is as if a man on the bank, having seen his friend in river, already bobbed down two or three times, hails: 'I say, old fellow, let us know when we are to throw you the life-buoy. I know you have bobbed down two or three times; but it is a pity to throw you the life-buoy till you are *in extremis*, and I want to know exactly.'"

A letter with "I hope you are well—all well here," like a school-boy's communication, a bit of cipher of which he has not the key, are all that reach him in his three months of solitude. It was nobody's fault after all, for many messengers seem to have been sent, but it was hard for the prisoner to conceive this. "I never saw such a poor lot as these outsiders," he cries, half jesting still. "Even if they had to pay £20 out of their own pockets, one might have expected them to do it." "Kitchener," he adds, "asks Stewart, 'What he can do for him?'—nothing of what has gone on with respect to the Soudan since Graham's expedition." Of all this he is ignorant. The caged lion cries out with pain and miserable suspense, then breaks away from the subject that would madden him, to record some little incident that relieves the strain, some trifling circumstances of the life about him. For even on that house-top, under the glaring sun, with his eyes on every movement of the enemy, he has still time to notice a hundred little matters which amuse his fancy and make existence possible. Life cannot be concentrated on one thought, even when it is waiting for destruction—and in Khartoum, though it is a doomed city, this wonderful, inflexible existence goes on as if all were

well. The people jesting, quarrelling in the streets—even marrying; the turkey-cock gobbling and strutting among his harem, and all the humours of life going on. This turkey figures in the journal by way of escape from Egerton & Co.,—his jealousy and his dignity, his fierce clucking and scolding, one of the most distinct features in the picture. Gordon is afraid of the turkey, and thinks him one of the most perfect emblems of strength and courage. He sees all this with clear eyes that never seem weary. He is open to all that is amusing, natural, in the strained circumstances: the black soldiers who see themselves in the mirror for the first time, and do not know who it is; the donkey who is astonished beyond measure by the explosion of the mine under his feet, but takes no harm: nothing escapes him. And though he is angry by turns, and works himself up now and then into a burst of irritated laughter, there is not a moment of moping—not a breakdown in the whole record. His head is always high, his mind always ready to be interested, the smile never far from his lip. Where he stands at bay, a man deserted and without hope, he is still a gay Gordon—one to whom nothing can ever be wholly miserable, who finds pleasure in the solemn moments as they fly, and is entertained by the lightest passing incident. A mixture of that *insouciance* which is the salvation of a mind burdened with care, a touch of the dare-devil in the saint, gives piquancy, interest, humour to the tale, which glows with indignation only to melt into kindness after, to be beguiled by heartfelt laughter in the midst of miseries which are too deep for tears.

"Werena my heart licht, I wad dee."

It is curious that, at this fatal moment, when the current was rising round him that could carry him only to death, and failure which was worse than death, there is less said about his religious life than in the former journals from Africa. The reason is, perhaps, that Gordon, in the one case, was writing to the most sympathetic of correspondents; in the other, to a vague and general audience, the public, the approaching generals, the men who had deserted and betrayed him, whom he cannot trust himself to speak to seriously, but only banter, with that laugh which is sometimes fierce, strained, and terrible, with the anguish and the impotence which lie underneath. And as the whirl of this progress towards destruction quickens, the whirl of thought is quickened too, and surges and sweeps through the brain of the beleaguered general, returning and returning in circles of speculation, of calculation, of impassioned plans and suggestion. Were he but outside and his worst enemy within, how swift, how sure, how triumphant should the rescue be! Had he but the power, what desert, what river, what force of opposing nature, or man, or devils, could hold him back! He has it all laid out in his mind, every step of the way. If only they would let him know where they are, what they are doing! He plans to send off his steamers, the wonderful little craft which he loves, which are like living creatures to Gordon, to meet them, to carry them advice and directions—nay, sends them off, as everybody knows. On his part he neglects nothing, forgets nothing. When the Bordeen comes back from a voyage of discovery in November, it seems to him possible that she may bring some

of the deliverers with her. "If any officer of the Expedition is on board, he will know what it is to be in a penny boat under cannon-fire." But when the Bordeen reaches shelter with her news, heart-sickening with the faintness of hope deferred—"The expeditionary force is at Ambukol (which is LIVELY!)"—is all that Gordon says. At Ambukol, on the other side of the desert! when he thought they were at his doors. He says nothing but that light word of despair. He has that telegram at the same time in cipher, to which he has no key. Could the irony of fate go further? One would like to know what the never-deciphered message sent to the man abandoned—left there to perish while the official world made up its numerals—was about.

The circle grows closer and closer. The Arabs swarm all round; they are firing constantly, a ceaseless irritating rattle in his ears, doing little harm within the walls, but sometimes striking a steamer, whose wounds he feels in his very heart. One of them, a little launch newly put together, is struck by a shell under his eyes, and stops, with disastrous significance, puffing off her little banner of steam like a flag of distress. "I gave the glass to my boy, *sickened unto death*." At last comes the end of all: not yet despairing, still with courage for the future, with a brain tingling with projects of relief, he repeats over again to himself how little would do. "A hundred men are all we require, just to show themselves." "All that is absolutely necessary is for fifty to get on board a steamer and come up." Then, "Even if the town falls under the nose of the expeditionary force, it will not, in my opinion, justify the abandonment of Senaar and Kassala."

Ah! and again, "If I was in command of the two hundred men of the expeditionary force, which are all that are necessary, I should——" Had it but been so! but so it was not to be. The same day, 14th of December, he says for the last time on earth, "Good-bye. I have done my best for the honour of our country." And then the darkness falls over Gordon. With what unexampled efforts he lingered out more than a month longer, accomplishing the impossible, no one knows, nor in all human probability will it ever be known. It is written in the books which are preparing for the Grand Assize, where one day every man shall answer for himself.

The present writer is no enemy to Mr Gladstone, and has an unconquerable inclination to believe that, however humanity may err, there is no English statesman who does not try, according to his lights, to do his duty. But here is one indictment against him which, without animosity, without party feeling, in the plain and stern simplicity of fact, seems to us beyond pardon, as beyond reply. General Gordon, one of the rarest of God's creatures, a man whose characteristics were well known, and about whom no mistake was possible, was stopped on his way to his own work, by the order of the Government of England, and sent off, at half a day's notice, on

a dangerous, almost desperate undertaking. After that, for seven long months, he was left without help or support, his representations neglected, his requests refused, with nothing but insulting questions—questions insulting in their stupidity: "Can't you pay the tribes to escort you out?"—and "How long exactly can you keep in?" reaching him in the solitude of the desert. Not till after every warning voice had shrieked itself hoarse—after appeals of every kind had been tried—at the last moment, when almost every chance had been lost, reluctantly, grudgingly, was help sent—too late; inflicting on the victim five other months of sickening hope never to be realised. Did Mr Gladstone toss Gordon to the wolves, like the woman in Mr Browning's poem, in the distraction of terror and egotism, as the only expedient that occurred to him? Did he fail, with his great intellect, to master the situation? Was it an overweening confidence in the magical powers of the Wizard General? Was it, is it possible to imagine it to be, indifference?—the comfortable conclusion that one man more or less does not matter? One of these things it must have been. Let the late Prime Minister, when he takes the field again in Mid-Lothian or elsewhere, answer, Which was it? If not his contemporaries, at least History has a right to a reply.

THE CONSERVATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

THE formation of a Government by the Marquis of Salisbury, which we were barely able to announce last month, is a subject of profound interest rather than of exultation. His lordship's Administration, no doubt, relieves some pressing needs of the country, or its existence would not be justified; nevertheless it does not march in triumph to its high place. No trumpet of victory has been sounded; a very arduous and uninviting office has been assumed by it. Were there no end to be served but that of party, it would be a time of lamentation for Conservatives.

We do not imagine that we have won a battle. We know full well that it suited the convenience of Mr Gladstone's Ministry to undergo a defeat, which was as much a real disaster as the acceptance of the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds is an accession to office under the Crown. By some manœuvre, not yet clearly explained, a situation was achieved wherein resignation of office was, by the letter of constitutional precedents, regular; and the occasion was taken by the forelock. Ere the hurly-burly of what we may call by courtesy the mischance had subsided in the House of Commons, Mr Gladstone—his part well prepared—was calmly inditing a dutiful communication to advise her Majesty of what had fallen out, and what would be the consequence of the acceptable accident. What considerations chiefly swayed the Queen at this juncture we are not permitted to know, though every man in the kingdom of any public spirit has made a guess at them. Her Majesty appealed to Lord Salisbury and the Conservative party to as-

sume the direction of the affairs of her dominions; and the appeal was made in terms which those public-spirited men felt to be irresistible. Some of the more voluble of the retiring Ministry have with crushing scorn affirmed that their successors come in as "caretakers," or as a "stop-gap," to keep the seats warm until they, like Titans reanimated by a fall, shall be ready to leap into them once more; but they know, and we know, that whatever may be their tenure of office, the new Government has been summoned to save the State, certainly from dishonour and degradation—perhaps from ruin.

The first, the pressing necessity, was to cut short Mr Gladstone's calamitous career. That has been done. The second is to bring back, if possible, our affairs from the sinking state to which they have been reduced, and to take order for the safety and recovery of the kingdom. This latter service will have to be effected under the shadow of a hostile majority in the House of Commons: in the most favourable circumstances it would severely tax the abilities of the new Ministry; situated as they are, they have accepted a burden which must prove all but intolerable. What we have said, therefore, should make it clear that we have nothing whereof to glory, and that this is a call to hard and trying work and not to boasting. Lord Salisbury and his colleagues have accepted their commissions purely for the sake of their Sovereign and their country; the only rewards to which they can look forward are their Sovereign's approbation, and the recognition by the country of such efforts as they may make to fulfil the task

imposed upon them: the Sovereign assuredly will not repudiate her share of these obligations, and we trust the people will be mindful of theirs.

There never was a doubt but that the Premier had plenty of staunch followers with whom to man his Administration: now that his appointments have all been made, we may well be satisfied with the prompt discretion of his choice. Every good Conservative, and, as we hope, many an honest Briton who may not reckon himself as strictly within the Conservative ranks, will rejoice to see good Earl Iddesleigh at the head of the Treasury, where a better or a more capable man could not preside. Like the Douglas of old, he deserves the superscription of "tendir and trew." Of consular rank, if not the very consul, he takes the place in the senate which is due to his services and his standing as a statesman. Beside him in the Cabinet are ranged many tried and trusted chiefs, among whom we gladly recognise, as having grown old without flinching from their faith, Lord Cranbrook and Lord John Manners.

We cannot but be pleased to see that the promotion of younger blood into the front ranks, which we noted as desirable no longer ago than last June,¹ has been approved and carried into act. Lord George Hamilton and Lord Randolph Churchill become heads of departments, and Lord Halsbury, advanced to the woolsack, gains a higher field for the exercise of his distinguished talents.

If these and their fellows do honour to the selection of their leader, that leader is worthy to be the chief of so able and so stout a band. Of the Marquis's abilities

and industry the British public have long been cognisant: it is only of late years that he has shown them of what a constant mind he is, and how patiently and discreetly he can deal with matters of opinion and affairs of state. The long and temperate opposition which Mr Gladstone compelled him to make against the celebrated stumping tour of last summer, convinced the people of his ability to address the masses in a style which will win their confidence; while his plain and frank, yet profound and effective, handling of public questions, contrasting favourably against the unctuous ambiguities and cant which they have been accustomed to hear from a rival mouth, left a thorough impression that he would deal in a statesman-like manner with the great business of the kingdom. The agitation about Redistribution was, in effect, a happy movement for the Marquis's personal reputation. His enemies had studiously and persistently disseminated an idea that he was too haughty and too aristocratic to give his mind to matters affecting principally the great body of the people: the late campaign showed how thoroughly popular are his sympathies, and with what readiness and ability he investigates and masters the social questions in which the public closely interest themselves. His advent is full of promise.

We cannot close this brief notice of the new Ministers without congratulating Mr Gibson and his friends on the high position to which, professionally and socially, he has attained. Often, no doubt, we may have reason to regret his disappearance from the House of Commons; but he has not gone to idleness, and he will attend to our

¹ *Vide* Blackwood's Magazine for June 1885, Art. "Gladstone Sagacity Unfolding."

interests elsewhere. Neither can we forbear to express our satisfaction at finding Mr Robert Bourke once more in office, and our hope that ere long his services will be rewarded with a higher appointment.

The re-elections of those members of the House of Commons who have accepted office have been all achieved, which result is most encouraging. In many instances there was no opposition; but wherever a rival did spring up, he was defeated. We do not wish to rate these successes at more than their worth, but they have a decided value just now. With the majority of the House adverse, the mildest indication that the country is with us is very gratefully received. Possibly, too, the issue of the elections has a little damped the confidence of Opposition orators. They began by celebrating their coming triumphs as if they held the proxies of the whole community; but their latter notes are very like Acres's "We'll not run; eh, Sir Lucius?"

Following the elections, the statements made by Ministers in both Houses as to public business appear to have been well received there, and by the country at large. Our foreign policy, that "word of fear" which has for long been so "unpleasing to a *British* ear," is to be conducted on settled and consistent principles. We may reasonably hope, from what has been told us, that, in this important respect, the country will no longer have to live in terror of wild, vacillating, unintelligible courses, indicating no definite aim, and leading to no satisfactory result, though wasting quantities of blood and treasure which it is fearful to contemplate. The Government will adopt and pursue a policy which it will not be afraid or ashamed to make known; so that

the public will at least be able to follow and to comprehend what is being attempted in regard to its affairs—an advantage which the British public has not enjoyed for five years past. And yet the continuity of our policy, as national, will not be interrupted by acts calculated merely to gratify party spite, or to realise the dreams of fanatics. Ministers, whether approving or not, will respect and set their seal to such obligations as their predecessors have undertaken in the name of the country.

With regard to the fearfully misconducted business of the north-western frontier of India, the negotiations with Russia, as far as they have led to distinct stipulations, will be adhered to. There will be no attempt at reversal or repudiation; only in regard to what had not been settled when they took office the hands of Ministers are free. To make the best of this bad business is the problem before them. They have told us that our main security must be found, not in treaties or agreements, but in the material strengthening and guarding of our own frontier. We return, in fact (as far as it is still possible to return), to the simple and sagacious policy of Lord Beaconsfield, which Mr Gladstone's insane jealousy so unhappily interrupted and cancelled. We think we may add, on our own account, that we need not dread the submission of our Ministers to any more encroaching demands or Penj-deh surprises: indeed Russia, sagacious always in recognising facts and reading character, would appear, by the Prime Minister's statement, to have already conformed herself to events, and addressed herself to settling affairs as with men of this world. Should she still incline to be troublesome, we may now indulge the hope that

she will be met with skill and firmness, and that the outcome will be peace with no more dishonour.

Concerning the tangled skein of Egypt, our new rulers have as yet been able to speak to us only in the most general terms; indeed we should have felt distrustful if they had pretended to give precise information as to the line to be taken with either of the three main heads under which they have divided their duties—namely, military occupation, civil government, and finance. Of one thing we are assured—they have relegated to their proper limbo the absurd fiction, that a few weeks or a few months are to see us far from the shadow of the Pyramids, and the transparent fallacy that there is at Cairo an independent Government, indebted to Downing Street for nothing more intrusive than advice. Localised as they may seem, the affairs of Egypt are proportioned to the state of Great Britain's relations with the leading States of Europe. Those relations had become, under the late Government, most unsatisfactory—the outcome of the imagined and attempted concert of Europe. Lord Salisbury ridiculed that delusion, and foretold its fate years ago. More rational plans will be adopted now, and we need not fear but that when the genius of our land shall appear no longer as a half-witted sentimentalist chasing bubbles, but clothed once more, and in his right mind, foreign Powers will take counsel with the recovered lunatic, and cease to be suspicious and contrary. The policies, whatever they may be, are to be well considered before they are adopted, in order that there may be no withdrawals and inconsistencies; and, happen what may, England will not “cover herself with shame” by abandoning the land of Egypt to its fate.

The foreign outlook having thus been revealed as far as was possible under the circumstances, Ministers adverted to their assumption of the reins at home, and the manner in which they propose to deal with domestic affairs. Of course the enormous vote of credit must be redeemed as well as the year's wants provided for. The estimates must be taken up at the point where Mr Gladstone, by his cunning, but perhaps not very clever, stampede from office left them. Mr Childers's scheme, as far as the Commons would approve it, will yet stand good, and the revenue which he was not allowed to raise from beer will be made up by the issue of Exchequer and Treasury bills. The recital of this by the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have ended the story of our crushing taxes, had everything stated by Mr Childers thereanent been strictly accurate; but when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had reached this point, he had to make the disagreeable addendum—

“Tarry a little, there is something else.”

It had been ascertained that the estimate of the outgoing Government of the charge on Admiralty account against the 11 millions taken on the vote of credit was too low by £850,000. Mr Childers had been of opinion that out of the 11 millions granted, only 9 millions would be spent; but here was nearly another million! Lord Northbrook has given a lengthened explanation which is far from being satisfactory; and we are glad to know that a Select Committee will be ordered to inquire into, and report upon, the matter.

The utmost possible has been done to ensure attention before the prorogation to such bills as the late Government had made ready for presentation to Parliament. Among these we are glad to see that the

Secretary for Scotland Bill is included. There appears to be some difference of opinion as to the control of the new Minister in educational matters; but that point as well as others will be considered by Parliament, and we doubt not that, through the consideration shown by Government to Lord Rosebery's measure, Scotland will speedily obtain an administrative change for which a large part of her population has long been hoping.

The steps taken by Lord Salisbury's Government show a readiness and an ability which are highly creditable to them, and of which the country, as we hope, will take note. It completely disproves the predictions which only a few weeks ago Radicals were making so generally, to the effect that the Conservatives would hardly be able to form an Administration, and that even if they should succeed in doing so, they would be unequal to the conduct of affairs. The people now has the assurance that by returning a Conservative majority at the coming general election, it will have a competent Ministry.

It would have been too much to expect, that on the occurrence of so great a change as has taken place in the direction of our affairs, everything should be ordered according to our wishes. We are delighted and thankful that the improvements which it has been our pleasure to note, have been so many and salutary. But only too certainly, at such times of rejoicing, rises up that *amari aliquid* which will present itself evermore to dull the flavour of pleasant things. And we recognise the skeleton here. Only last month, in forecasting the responsibilities which the Premier was taking upon himself, we said that Ireland would be his difficulty,—meaning that the miserable state to which

Ireland was reduced by the late Government had put it beyond the power of any man, or any set of men, to effect a rapid amelioration—not that we apprehended from him any treatment of Ireland as to which we could feel a doubt.

However, the announcement that no Crimes Act for Ireland is at present contemplated, has, we confess, disappointed us, and caused us much alarm. That no Peace Preservation measure could be enacted this session, and that therefore Ireland must be left for a few weeks to the protection of only the ordinary law after the expiration of the moribund Act, was easy to understand; and had Ministers, simply pleading the necessity of the case, postponed action to the meeting of another Parliament, there could have been no reason to dissent from their proposal, however much the want of a stringent law might be regretted. But they have gone far beyond simply submitting to necessity and postponing a much-needed remedy. They have been careful to announce not only that a Crimes Act cannot be carried through the present Parliament, but that they do not propose, unless circumstances should prove to be beyond expectation untoward, to ask for any extraordinary powers at all.

Now surely it is perceptible at a glance, that whatever diminution of crime there has been in Ireland during the last two years, was wholly due to the Act of 1882. The obvious deduction is, that if we desire the continuance of quiet, another Act must be provided similar to that which is about to run out. Ministers, however, tell us that they intend to make no such provision—in other words, that if orderly and law-abiding subjects cannot be protected by the ordinary law, they will not be protected at all. We say, as every-

body will say, that if Ireland can be kept in order without special enactment, there will be cause for unbounded congratulation. But we say also, that the risk proposed to be run is enormous, and one to which we have no right to subject peaceable citizens for the sake of experimenting upon the sentiments of rebels and criminals. The point is one on which again and again we have made known our opinion; and, wishing the new Ministry to excel in all its undertakings, we are disheartened more than we can express by this announcement. As yet it is only an announcement, and a conditional one. We, in common with very many sincere well-wishers of the Ministry, will hope that it may not be persisted in when there shall be opportunity of legislating on the subject.

Having made our protest, we have pleasure in adding that in some of the remarks which have fallen from Ministers regarding legislation for preserving the peace we can agree. It has been remarked that in case of special legislation being necessary, it would be better to make it apply to the United Kingdom generally, and not to Ireland alone; also, that such legislation should not be exceptional and temporary, but should be placed on the statute-book without limit as to duration. The latter proposal—viz., that such laws should not be for a fixed period—we think excellent. Many of the Coercion Acts heretofore passed for Ireland would, we venture to say, have been much more efficacious if they had been unlimited. Let us by all means, if unhappily we *must* make such laws, not define their duration. As to making them apply to the United Kingdom, we are not, by strict justice, bound to do any such thing. It is perfectly fair to

say, if Ireland creates the scandal, let her bear the reproach—

“Where the offence is, let the great axe fall.”

But this long-standing and most complicated case demands other considerations besides those of stern justice. It is one of the favourite complaints of the disaffected Irish, that their island is regarded as alien, and governed with a vindictive rather than a paternal hand, being made in this respect a striking contrast to England and Scotland. However unfair such a complaint may be, it has by iteration made some impression not only among ourselves but among foreigners also. Again, the penal measures which our Legislature approves, do not generally oppress any but the criminal and disaffected. England and Scotland, therefore, though they would never have made exceptional laws necessary, may safely endure the operation of them. Moreover, the branding, as it were, ourselves for the sins of Ireland, must prove our desire that both islands should share alike in the evil which, by some fault among us, so readily besets us. Therefore, as long as Great Britain is not deprived in effect of her freedom or of any part of it, we should be inclined to allow these Peace Preservation Acts to apply to the United Kingdom.

The Opposition are angry, and insinuations have been made that Ministers have some kind of understanding with the Parnellites because the Viceroy of Ireland will not refuse to reconsider some verdicts of juries and judicial sentences if prayed to do so. But surely complaint on this subject is premature. The Viceroy is not bound to close his ears against a petition setting forth that justice has, in

certain cases, miscarried; and if he acts, as we doubt not that he will, with strict justice in the matter, no one will have a right to find fault. An unfair revision might properly be reflected on; but as yet there has been no revision at all.

Ministers have spoken boldly, and unhesitatingly accepted responsibility regarding Ireland. Our experience is too old and too sad to allow us, because they are sanguine, to assume that their government of Ireland will be at the outset successful. Nevertheless it is probable that Lord Beaconsfield's Government had ready in 1880 some plan for dealing with Ireland which the deposition of the party from power prevented them from producing. If so, and if they are now bringing out their scheme after it has been five years dormant, there is reason to hope that it merits the confidence with which they regard it.

It is matter for rejoicing that the causes of the depression in trade are to be inquired into by a competent Commission. For quite ten years now there has been a downward tendency in business everywhere; and there is much reason to fear that the low level which has at length been reached is due to an insane foreign and colonial policy, and to a meddling disposition at home, whereby capital has been scared and enterprise depressed. We shall do well, too, to investigate the real operation of our free-trade system, persisted in without the reciprocity of foreign States. The cry of the unemployed, raised in a time of peace, and of rapid communication, argues that we have gone widely wrong in some directions, and no time ought to be lost before inquiring into the sources of the mischief.

So far as things have gone, there is no reason to complain of obstruc-

tive opposition; and our acknowledgments are due to Mr Gladstone and the members of the late Government for the disposition which they have shown to help forward the necessary business of the session. One or two attempts made by the wilder Radicals to embarrass the Administration have failed signally. If only a calm spirit can be maintained for a week or two longer, the routine work of the year will be disposed of, and politicians will be able to give their whole attention to the general election, which is now only four months off. Of course there has been the inevitable Bradlaugh dispute; and this time an attempt was made, by an ingeniously framed amendment, to lure members from deciding on the main question. But they manfully refused the bait, and rejected the unbeliever decidedly, thus clearing the board for the prosecution of useful and necessary business.

During the short time which has elapsed since power changed hands, the Duke of Argyll has found time for commenting with strength and cleverness on the evils which must result to the country from our having a Liberal Cabinet which is united in name only, and which is in reality divided into sections far more irreconcilable than Whigs and Tories. His Grace was, as we need scarcely remind our readers, a member of Mr Gladstone's Cabinet as it was formed in 1880. He therefore spoke of a state of things of which he had an ample, and a not very happy, experience. The object of his speech—which has been called a lecture—does not seem to have been quite clear to many minds. We have little doubt, however, ourselves, that he intended now, at once, before the opening of a so-called Liberal campaign, in which Whigs and Radicals, under the

banners of the Caucus, will for the moment appear as brethren solicitous only to exclude the common enemy from power, to caution the country against being duped into countenancing any such unhallowed fraternity. It may suit the tactics of the two different sections to join hands during the canvass, and to acquire power as parts of one and the same solid political body; but to the country their joint tenure of power would mean simply renewed disaster.

"I venture to say to the country," said the Duke, "and to all parties in the country, in the great appeal which is about to be made to the new constituencies, not to go in for united faces, but to go in for great constitutional principles—to choose, if they can, independent men; not to be humbugged by the cry of unity where the deepest divisions on fundamental principles of human government are really concerned—to choose, if they can, independent men, and men of independent character. What we want is men, not sheep; we want men who have studied great questions, who have independent opinions in regard to them, and who will stand to them on the hustings. I am bound to say that I have generally observed that men of this character are more respected than men who go down on their hands and knees, grovelling with their heads in the dust, and saying, 'We will do whatsoever you bid us.' What we want, in the words of the poet-laureate, is men

'Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with eternal God for power.'

These are the men that all the nations want, but especially ours at the present time. Happy is the nation that hath its quiver full of them! They will be able to speak with their enemies in the gate."

Now we would fain believe that the Duke of Argyll did not speak for himself alone on this occasion. There are many symptoms abroad

indicating that a large class of moderate and independent men, who probably would call themselves Whigs if urged to hoist colours, have perceived the gross imposture and the utter absurdity of Whigs and Radicals pretending to act together for the public good: also, that they have made up their mind to countenance no such hybrid juncture at the coming election. They will not accept the profession of Liberalism as any real indication of political leaning, but will require to be informed of a man's principles and particular school before they determine how to regard him. If these moderate men acquire any weight, as we hope and believe that they may, it will not again be possible to have a Cabinet compounded of Whigs and Radicals: it must, if Liberal at all, be one of these wholly, or the other. And whichever may be the successful section will be very likely to find the other section very hostile and dark.

What leads one the more readily to believe that some such distinction is to be insisted on is that, for a fortnight or three weeks past, the Liberal orators have greatly lowered their tone. Their boasting at first was unbounded. They treated the idea that Tories could be returned to Parliament in any number as simply absurd. Now they are calling to one another as if in alarm, to rally, to sink minor differences, to come to the hustings as one united party. It is to be remarked that the many Liberal orators who from day to day are endeavouring to keep up the credit of their party, while they make a great clamour about the Franchise Act, are particularly reticent about the wars in which we have been engaged for the last five years, about our foreign policy, and especially about the eleven millions

and the consequent heavy taxation. If they imagine that the country, in choosing another House of Commons, will be unmindful of these things, they dangerously deceive themselves. The people cannot, if they would, lay aside all thought of the taxes which daily press upon them; and they assuredly have not forgotten the useless bombardments and wars in Egypt, or the sacrifice of Gordon. They will revert at election time to the poltroonery in South Africa, and to the dishonourable negotiations concerning the Afghan frontier. And they will demand an account of these things. There is some reason for believing that some speakers—thinking perhaps of the head-hiding habit of the ostrich—imagine that by shutting their own eyes to these crying accusations they can render their countrymen blind to them also. One example of real or affected innocence occurred in Mr Mundella's speech, delivered on the 8th July at Sheffield. "The Tories," he said, "would borrow money and leave the Liberals to pay the bill." Now this remark almost invited a heavy retort, and we can hardly imagine that the speaker would have made it unless he had lulled himself into a delightful oblivion of the real state of things. For who are they that are paying an enormously heavy bill at this moment? and who incurred the expense? It was hardly wise, as one thinks, to send out a bolt which was so certain to come back with accelerated force on the party for whose behoof it was made.

Abuse of the Tories and their wickedness will assuredly not serve the turn of the Liberals at the next election. They have a serious account to render for themselves, and they will not be allowed to shirk it. They must explain

how it was that the peace, prosperity, and light burdens which were promised in 1880 proved to be mere moonshine. They must tell, if they can, why Gordon was left to his fate; and what was the meaning of the wholesale slaughters which they inflicted in the Soudan upon people over whom we claimed no sovereignty, and who were not known to be breaking any law or covenant. And they will be called upon to explain the sudden change of strategy which was followed when they abandoned the making of the Suakim railway, and withdrew the troops which had been pushed southward with so much labour and expense. It will be demanded of them why they obstinately persisted in leaving the north-western frontier of our Indian empire undefended, and why, when Russia made her spring upon Afghan territory, English interests and English honour were so shamefully sacrificed. And it is quite possible that when on the hustings they may hear again of the war-fury which was simulated in the House of Commons for the purpose of obtaining a vote of credit. This will form an unpleasant catechism. And there are a vast number of questions demanding consideration of the electors, which cannot usefully be put to candidates. The electors must reflect on whether the country could stand the damage which would assuredly come upon us if we were again to commit our foreign relations to hands so incompetent as those of Mr Gladstone's late Cabinet, and whether we could endure to be again a sort of outcast among the nations. One imminent danger ought alone to deter every patriotic Briton from assisting to bring back Mr Gladstone to power. We have entered upon a current of events wherein

it is essential to us to have Turkey as an ally. Mr Gladstone has abused and insulted Turkey in a degree which the Turks never can pardon. It is therefore necessary to our safety that, while any prospect may remain of a war with Russia, Mr Gladstone should be debarred from all control of our affairs. We shall be exceedingly glad to learn that our rulers have been taking steps to establish most friendly relations with the Sublime Porte, and that they are interesting themselves about the efficiency of the Ottoman army. Our benevolent intervention cannot fail to be of benefit to Turkey herself, and the good condition of her army will be for some years to come a matter of the greatest importance to us.

No man has spoken more boldly and decidedly than the Marquis of Salisbury in condemnation of legislation directed against a particular class of the community for the benefit of other classes. He has always held that the general prosperity is best secured by measures that tend to benefit all classes, and not by such as would set class against class. Nothing can be plainer than that views the direct opposite of his have been entertained and acted upon during the last five years to the great detriment of business generally. Quarrels about wages and profits have depressed industry so greatly, that in many branches there remain no profits to be quarrelled for, and in many the labourers cannot get work to do. All of our industrial population must by this time perceive that a system which will keep

the masses in steady work is far preferable to one which seeks to meddle with the natural relations of supply and demand, and by doing so depresses trade and commerce. They must understand that the Radical methods which promise to them such great things, bring, in practice, nothing but disunion and loss; while the steady old-fashioned doctrine—that the good of the whole, if it can be achieved, infallibly involves the good of all the parts—rests on far sounder grounds. If this be their belief—if they have duly used their powers of observation during the last five years—there can be little doubt of their securing to the Conservatives a term of office sufficient to enable them to illustrate their maxims of fair play and general progress.

We are at present passing through a most important stage in our national history. The Sovereign has seen that it is so; the Conservative party has seen that it is so; and both her Majesty and the new Government, putting convenience aside, have taken such action as will tend to the prevention of disaster and to the restoration of our affairs. But another factor must intervene before the country can stand clear of peril, and open to the salutary influences which may gradually wipe out our past disgraces. The people have yet to speak, and we trust that they will testify to their appreciation of what has just been done on their behalf, and their perception of the great dangers which threaten them, by giving a hearty support to the Salisbury Administration.

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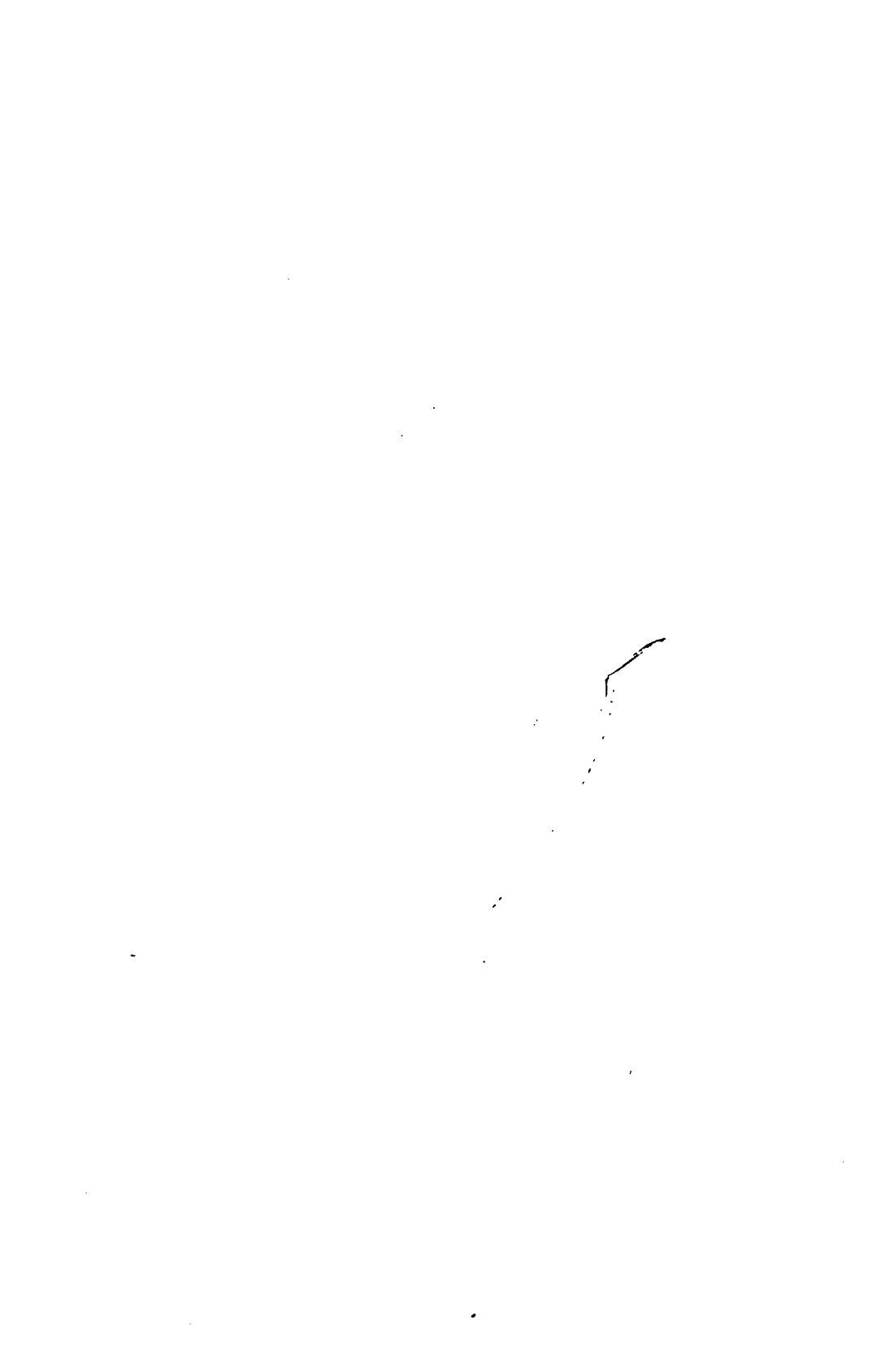
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THE CRACK OF DOOM.—PART II.

CHAPTER VIII.

RASPIAN'S "parliament of prigs," as Mrs Brockley contemptuously called the garden-party to which her daughter was bound, was held at that gentleman's bachelor residence in the western suburbs. It was an old-fashioned house of commodious but plain construction, built with its face to the south, near the top of the northern slope, just where the ascent began to slacken and bend over gently, exposing the soil to the full force of the southern sun. As you sat in the verandah, which ran along the front, there was a soft green acclivity before you, over which you saw nothing but the sky; from the bedroom windows of the second storey you looked over into the terraced garden sloping quickly down. In spring and summer mornings the birds piped and twittered in full-est chorus from the thick growth of trees and bushes in the garden. The great leader and organiser of

prigdom had known how to cast his lines in pleasant places. The rising tide of social show and comfort had made the house too small for a well-to-do family; the advancing waves of the town had long since overtaken and surrounded it; but it was still large enough for a comfortable bachelor,—and once within its high garden walls you had as complete a sense of seclusion as if you had been in the depths of the New Forest.

It was Mr Raspian's ambition to gather round him all that was best and most promising in the literary talent of the rising generation. The scorers of the new order called them prigs. I call a man a prig who knows more than myself, and takes no pains to disguise the cruel fact. Probably this was what the scorers meant. The height of superior wisdom is to conceal the superiority, to avert the suspicion of it. Mr Raspian's young men knew a

great deal, and they did not hide their knowledge under a bushel; they made it flame and crackle in the luminous pages of their great organ, to which its founder had given the mysterious name of the 'Serapeum.'

It was a really formidable band of reviewers that he had brought together, all astonishingly well-read for their years—laboriously learned, laboriously satirical, all young enough to enjoy dancing on ignorance and presumption without a pang of pity or remorse. They were not given to praising, their victims used to say, except the members of their own fraternity.

There was a great muster this afternoon, and when Mrs Rorke and her cavalier entered, conversation was going on briskly among the groups eating ices in the verandah and scattered about over the lawn and under the trees. The sun had come out after the chill cloudy morning, and was powerful enough to make the afternoon warm.

The first figure that Millerby's eyes lit on when the garden door was opened on the lively hum and chatter of many voices, was the Austrian Count. That distinguished-looking foreigner was discoursing with the host and Miss Fanny Douglas, one of his lady contributors, the party standing on the edge of the grass near the door. Hugh in a rapid aside indicated him to Mrs Rorke as they entered. He had apparently been drawing out the editor about his principles of editing, for they heard Mr Raspian say in loud firm tones, before turning to welcome the new arrivals—

"I insist upon all my contributors sticking to one line. All specialists. There is no chance of getting reviewing thoroughly done on any other plan."

The great editor did not resume the conversation. When he had introduced the Count to Mrs Rorke, he remarked that she was looking pale, and courteously conducted her to a seat in the verandah. Miss Douglas moved off with the Count, and said in a low tone—

"That last remark of the editor's was meant for me, I suppose. He has just refused to let me review Mrs Darby Rorke's new novel. I suppose he is afraid."

"And who is Mrs Darby Rorke?"

"The question shows that you have not been long in London. She is Jane Marjoram. But perhaps the fame of her novels has not reached Austria. They have been quite the rage here for two or three years."

"I have read one or two of them. The 'Yorkshire Vicarage' is hers, is it not? So Jane Marjoram is Mrs Darby Rorke. Strange!"

"Why strange?"

"Nothing particularly strange after all. Only a coincidence, common enough. Somehow we think it strange when we accidentally meet anybody, some of whose connections we have accidentally met before in very different circumstances. Such things are constantly happening, and we should not think it strange, should we? Only somehow we do."

"And you have met some connection of Mrs Darby Rorke's before?"

"It must be the same, I think. Both names could hardly be the same without some relationship."

"Perhaps it is her husband. We know nothing about him here. He is a mystery. We are all dying to know what he is and why she doesn't live with him."

"If it is the same, he is a newspaper correspondent or something of that sort in Vienna. So you

want to review Mrs Rorke's novel?" he continued, balking Miss Douglas's desire to hear more about Mr Rorke.

"Yes," she answered, a little nettled; "I should like to have my say about her work just for once. It is very flimsy and clatrapy."

"I understand now," said the Count, spiking a daisy with the point of his umbrella, "why Mrs Rorke turned pale when she saw you in conversation with the editor."

The lady laughed, and after a pause he asked—

"What, then, is the line that Mr Raspian has found for you, if you do write for him? But I thought you were a painter——"

"Oh, I scribble in the evenings sometimes for a change. I write what the sporting man of the 'Serapeum' calls snipe-shot articles, because they are put into small type. The Women's Righters are my pet topics."

"Of course, you are their natural champion."

Miss Douglas looked amused, and drily said, "Yes. I separate out the nonsense from the sense of the movement. Half of it is the pursuit of flirtation under new facilities."

"The sensible half," suggested the grave Count.

"Seriously speaking," pursued she, "I doubt whether you can teach women the meaning of work as men understand it. I mean the majority of them. You find an exception here and there. Don't say I am an exception—I am used to it. When a woman does anything fairly well that is generally considered within man's province, she is so extravagantly praised for it that she loses all motive to exert herself and improve. Now, there's that bright pretty thing Miss Quickset, she's full of fancy and

sentiment, and as clever as can be, and might write poetry really worth reading if they didn't spoil her by going into ecstasies over every little thing that she dashes off, and making her believe that it is too easy. She gets admiration too cheaply, and it's not in human nature to make greater exertion than circumstances require."

"You are right to make exception, however," said the Count, with a sad tremor in his voice. "My poor wife——" He stopped.

"Does she write poetry?" asked Miss Douglas, with unsuccessfully affected interest, her voice in spite of her indicating contempt.

"She is dead," answered the Count, mastering his emotion. "She took a passionate interest both in art and science, and painted with really marvellous power. There was, in fact, only one critic she could not satisfy, and that was herself. Her habit was to destroy her pictures as soon as they were painted, but I saved one by a stratagem, and had it exhibited under an assumed name. The critics raved about it. You must have seen it in the Salon last year. But," he continued, abruptly changing the subject, "show me some of the celebrities here."

"Let me see; well, there is, for example, the tall sandy-haired man talking with Miss Quickset and the young man who came with Mrs Rorke. That is Adam Napier, a man of very good family and a tremendous phys-i-cist. I must always take time to pronounce that terrible name. It sounds like a soda-water bottle very much up, with the cork half out. Most of Raspian's gang are coming men, but Napier may almost be said to have arrived. They say that no man of his age has done so much original work."

"Ah, I know him," said the Count. "He is engaged at present

in trying to discover the secret of the herring, I believe."

"Why didn't you stop me?" she complained. "That's not fair. Come, now, I believe you know as many people here as I do, and probably know a good deal more about them. I won't play at that game any longer."

"I am but a stranger here," he pleaded in excuse, with the nearest approach to a smile that he permitted himself. "I like to hear my casual acquaintances described, and compare what is said of them with my own impressions."

"That confession has at least the merit of frankness. Still, it's not fair, especially seeing that my descriptions are sometimes more graphic than complimentary. If you are to have any more descriptions from me, you must give me your impressions first, and then I will give you mine. Now, for example, what is your impression of our editor?"

"A good editor is known by his contributors," said the Count, sententiously. "He must be a clever man to have secured so brilliant a staff." And he bowed slightly to point the compliment.

"Thank you," said she, not displeased. "But I am not one of the staff. I am the merest outsider and casual. There are many better monuments of Mr Raspian's cleverness here than my humble self. In fact, his weakness rather is to try to catch too many. Has he been at you, yet, may I ask?"

"I have not been much more than a fortnight in London."

"Then he is falling off. A week should have been enough. I wonder what Quickset is saying to him, to make him chuckle so. Here he comes. Let's ask him."

"Well, what is it?" asked Miss Douglas, as the editor joined them, with manifest signs in his countenance of having been vastly amused.

"What is what?" said he, immediately becoming serious.

"What were you laughing at?"

"Only a little quip of Quickset's. Count Ramassy can tell us more about it, I believe," he added, turning to the Count. "Quickset says you have received information of a comet on its way to smash up everything, and that I had better be on the outlook." Mr Raspian's genial laughter began to bubble up again.

"I am to get him the positions to-night," said Count Ramassy.

"Could you let me have them?" asked the eager editor.

"You had better ask Mr Millerby. They are in his possession at present."

Raspian looked as if he should like to go to Millerby at once, but his fair contributor checked him—

"You don't mean that you were laughing so violently at the prospect of the destruction of the world. Think of the 'Serapeum.' If I had such a stake in the planet, I should be sad."

The truth was that Raspian's laughter had been partly a screen, under cover of which he might take himself off and ask Count Ramassy for further particulars. The jest, whatever it was, did not seem to tickle him so acutely now.

"It was Quickset's idea of the Great Beast that amused me."

Miss Douglas did not understand.

"Well, you know," he explained, "the Great Beast must make its appearance before the end of the world comes. He is one of the signs, you know. The Mohammedans have a peculiarly fine beast, with the head of a bull, the eyes of a pig, the neck of an ostrich, the skin of a leopard, the legs of a camel, and so forth. He is to rise up just before the end of the world, and have power for a certain time.

Now I asked Quickset if he could think of anything that answered the description. And what do you think was his answer?"

"The 'Serapeum'!" suggested Miss Douglas.

Raspian held up his hands in mock horror, laughed, and made off.

"What was it, then?" she called after him.

"Don't tell anybody," he returned to say. "Swear secrecy. It was the CAUCUS." And he made his escape to Millerby.

Meantime, Count Ramassy's observant eye had noted that Miss Douglas was interested in some movement in another part of the field.

"A nice little comedy was going on there while Raspian was talking to us," she said, in an undertone. "Very amusing to those in the secret. Did you happen to notice that when Raspian left him, Quickset called off his daughter on some pretext or other, to come and talk to Lady Napier?"

"No; I did not observe the circumstance," said the Count, in the tone of a man who, if he had observed it, would have seen nothing remarkable in such a simple occurrence.

"She was in animated conversation at the time with Mr Millerby, who looked rather disconcerted for a moment at the suddenness of the attack. Poor Millerby! you seem to know him too?"

"Oh yes, I have met him. I lunched with him to-day at the club, when he told me about the comet. But what is the matter with him? Why poor Millerby?"

"I happen to know a little secret about him, though I don't know that I ought to tell you. I am sure I ought not. The relations between him and Quickset are rather strained at present, that is all."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said the Count.

"I must say it was rather audacious on the part of the young man," laughed Miss Douglas. "I will put an imaginary case. Suppose a man had been rejected yesterday by a girl, and forbidden the house by her father,—do they do such things in Austria?"

"Such things occasionally happen."

"Suppose the man meets the girl to-day, we shall say, in a crowd like this, and sets up a lively flirtation with her under the father's very eyes—what is the father to do?"

"The situation is too difficult for me to form an opinion. It is beyond the range of my experience."

"Well, this stern parent is not a man to do things by halves. He has simply put his wing over the chick and carried her out of danger."

"A very obvious and proper solution, I should say."

"She doesn't seem to like it, though," commented Miss Douglas further. "She looks rather smumped, and perhaps a trifle mutinous."

"I see you have an eye for the comedy of life. It interests me too, I admit. There is plenty of room for romance in modern civilisation. We are very far from being reduced to a dead level yet. But how did you find out all this, if you are not an Asmodeus? I understand you to say that it happened only yesterday."

"Oh, Grace is a bosom friend of mine. The plunge was made in my studio. You needn't look suspicious. Asmodeus was not at the keyhole. I had a full, true, and particular account of the whole affair half an hour afterwards, and a letter this morning with the subsequent developments and complications."

"A century or two ago, I dare say," moralised the Count, "there would have been brawling and bloodletting over such an insult as Mr Quickset has now put upon Mr Millerby, quietly and decorously, and without anybody but yourself being aware of what had passed. This pleasant afternoon party would have broken up in most admired disorder. And yet passions are as fierce, and defeat is as bitter, now as ever. I am not sure that the struggle is not more consuming and intense now than it was in the old days when relief was at hand in violent immediate action. The old games go on as before, only with more intricate combinations, and more intolerable penalties for

the loser. I wonder," he continued, musingly, "how many more tragicomic games have been pushed a move forward in this frivolous-looking scene, where everybody looks pleased and chattering."

Miss Douglas listened to this harangue with queer changes of countenance, slight shades of sarcastic curiosity and impatience crossing the general expression of assent. "I declare you are quite a philosopher. I thought you men of science thought more about things than people. But you are quite right, I believe. What a world it is, to be sure! Most amusing. I could live in it for ever. I hope the comet won't put an end to it yet awhile."

CHAPTER IX.

Miss Douglas was not an altogether disinterested spectator of the comedy to which she had called Count Ramassy's attention. She had, in fact, been a principal actress in earlier scenes of it. It not only was in her studio, but it was by her contrivance that Hugh had made his ill-fated proposal. She had reason to know that it would result as it did.

The clever satirist of her sex and their new claims for the civic privileges and professions of men, was emphatically a strong-minded woman. She had thrown aside a good many of the traditions, and braved a good many of the prejudices, of gentlewomen. The theorists who maintain that some of the most notable differences between men and women are the result of education, would have found support in her history. Her mother had died when she was young, and she had been educated with her brothers, read all their books as well as her own, taken part in their games, talked with them as

they grew up about everything that interested them in their business and in their pleasures, been their *confidante* about many things that do not ordinarily come to the ears of girls. The father was an Ulsterman, who, starting in life as a bank clerk, had made a fortune as a stockbroker; one brother was in the army, the other followed his father's business. That the young lady should quarrel with her father on behalf of her brothers, and, in fact, head a family rebellion, was no breach of feminine tradition, but the sequel was unconventional. Miss Douglas absolutely refused to stay under the same roof with her parent; and being mistress of some £300 a-year in virtue of her mother's settlement, she set up a studio and a small establishment in company with her stockbroking brother in Bloomsbury. Here she painted, smoked cigarettes, and, as she told Count Ramassy, scribbled in the evenings for change.

It was a frequent subject of won-

der for Miss Douglas, as she looked at her strikingly handsome figure in the glass, that no man whom she cared for had ever proposed to marry her. She could not account for it, and it was a growing source of bitterness, of misogyny as well as misandry. Some of the puny feeble misses whom she despised and hated could have told her the secret. She was too restless and energetic, too much of a man in fact, to wait patiently to be wooed. Women often begin the attack, but then generally, as if frightened at their own temerity, they retreat, fall back in feigned disorder, and draw the enemy into an ambuscade. Miss Douglas was too direct, bold, and confident for such tactics; her attack was made in force, and continued without any artful pretence of inferiority.

Her attack on Millerby had been conducted with more than ordinary determination. Although, according to her own account, she was two years his junior—she was certainly not older than him—she took a sort of paternal, protectorial interest in the young fellow, with his large projects and procrastinating execution. Then, he was a more amusing companion than any other man of her acquaintance. Most men liked five or ten minutes' chat with Miss Douglas; few could stand an hour of her without unequivocal symptoms of weariness. She was an adept in the art of flattering the male, when disposed so to do, as well as in the kindred art of making him profoundly uncomfortable; but in a prolonged conversation unconsciously she slid into more or less covert glorification of her own gifts and achievements. This bored the ordinary listener, but delighted a professed observer of character like Millerby, who, so far from being bored, exerted himself to keep the current flowing in the

same direction. Hence he and she could get on together pleasantly for hours, entertaining and entertained. And the lady generously thought that if the partnership were for life she could make him do something with his undoubted talent.

Observing his attachment to pretty and fascinating Miss Quickset, and knowing exactly how the land lay, she had praised the girl to him on every opportunity, congratulated the credulous man on his good luck, and gaining his confidence, had, at his urgent request, contrived for him an opportunity of speaking to her.

Only one point in the plan had failed. Miss Douglas had known of Mr Quickset's objections to Millerby, and half suspected that but for this Miss Quickset would accept him. Now, for a reason known only to herself, Miss Douglas did not wish her friend to accept the young man or to give him any encouragement. She wished, on the contrary, a complete and final extinguisher to be placed on his hopes in that direction. And she argued that if the young lady said or hinted anything about her father's disinclination, Mr Millerby would be more infatuated with her than ever. Therefore, before kindly giving Millerby his opportunity, she had given her friend a little bit of friendly advice.

"If he should propose to you, Grace," she had said, "which is more than likely—for he seems to have cheek enough for anything—and if you mean to reject him, you should take all the responsibility on yourself. Your father is a public man, you know, and it might be awkward for him to have to say why he couldn't have Millerby as a son-in-law. Public men don't like making enemies. If I were you, I would give him to understand somehow that my father had quite a respect for him, and

that the fault lay with myself, you know."

"But," Grace had answered, "I don't think my father would be so mean as that."

"It's not meanness, my dear," was the Mentor's answer to this objection, "nor anything like it. It's only common policy and prudence. Besides, it would be much more agreeable for Millerby himself to be refused by you than by your father."

This last argument, carefully insisted on, had told. But when the exciting moment of the proposal came, the pupil had not proved able to carry out the instructions of the mistress with sufficient precision.

Miss Douglas was not pleased with this miscarriage. She saw the fruits of it in Hugh's rash attempt to reopen communications at Raspian's garden-party. Nor was she pleased to see him in company with Mrs Darby Rorke. It looked as if this lady were to have the benefit of the rebound.

Treasuring these grievances in her mind, Miss Douglas was eager for revenge, and resolved, if she could get him for ten minutes to herself this afternoon, that she would punish him severely.

Watching her opportunity, she bore down on him, and when the Count had joined another group, she moved off over the slope in the direction of the garden, giving Millerby no choice but to move with her.

"Now will I sprinkle salt into his wounds," said she vindictively to herself. She began mildly enough, so as not to frighten him off till he was securely hooked—

"What a remarkable man that Austrian Count is! Where did you meet him?"

Hugh recounted the circumstances.

"I met him," she continued,

"at Quickset's last night. He seems to have come here for the express purpose of making the acquaintance of the scientific men. Miss Quickset tells me that her father was the first *savant* he had called upon. That probably accounts for Quickset's extraordinary cordiality to him. I never saw the great astronomer more bent on impressing a stranger."

The lady shrewdly calculated that any little depreciation of the great astronomer would in the circumstances not be displeasing to her hearer. "Oh, come now, Quickset's not quite so weak as that," he said; but she detected a certain gratification in his tone, and persisted in the same strain.

"Great men have their weaknesses as well as little men; and the peculiar weakness of great men is inordinate vanity and jealousy. Flatter them enough and you can do anything with them."

"I should not call them great men in that case, but great fools. But as I am not a great man, I can't say what their secret feelings are."

"No; but you can guess. I will give you an instance. You would call Bright a great man, wouldn't you?" asked she; "one of the great orators of all time? Well, Raspian was talking to him not long ago about a speech of Dilke's which made an immense impression, you remember, and asked him what he thought of it. All that he said was—'The young man is getting on!' Rather meagre praise that, was it not?"

"What more would you have had him say?"

"Young man? Getting on? Why—ah, well—that is not all. Raspian went on to ask him whether he had any intention of taking part in the debate; and what do you think he said? 'What's the

use of *my* speaking? They don't report *me*.' Raspian thought at first that this was a little joke, and laughed; but it came out that the great man had been distributing school prizes or something of that kind in some remote place in the north of England, and no report of his speech had appeared in the London newspapers, probably because they had not known of his intention to speak, and consequently had not made arrangements. This was the secret of his soreness."

"Indigestion more likely," suggested Millerby.

"Quite so, or nervous exhaustion. But why should it take the absurd form of thinking himself slighted and passed over? You may give it any materialistic name you like, but I call it morbid and irritable jealousy—'that last infirmity of noble minds' which you men think peculiar to disappointed women. You remember how spiteful Godwin was when the crowd at the stage-coach office cheered a popular singer, and not a soul recognised or took the least notice of the author of 'Political Justice.' I verily believe that the more fame a man gets the greedier he grows. He is disappointed if he opens a newspaper without finding his name in it. He measures the volume of cheering, and is miserable if he is conscious of the slightest falling off of enthusiasm. If he were not cheered at all, I believe he would take to his bed and die—of indigestion perhaps."

"You want me to believe, I suppose, that Tennyson keeps accurate count of the number of uninvited pilgrims prying about his grounds, and that his spirits rise and fall with the average. Fancy him saying of a morning, 'Ah me, unhappy! I have not seen a Yankee dodging behind a tree for three

weeks. If I don't catch one to-day I shall die!'"

Miss Douglas protested against reducing her theory to mathematical measure. "I really think I must write a 'snipe-shot' on the Pathology of Greatness. Sheridan was quite right when he said that vanity was the one insatiable passion. There is really no end to the vanities of famous men. I amused myself last night with drawing out Quickset."

"Bother Quickset! Why not let Quickset alone? Don't vivisection him—you can demonstrate equally well from the dead subject."

"I daresay you have had enough of him for one afternoon. But I must have my illustration. Quickset is really a beautiful specimen. You know he thinks himself a sort of universal genius."

"Suppose he is?"

"If he had not been the greatest astronomer, he would have been the greatest painter of his generation."

"Why not?"

"Have you seen the carefully treasured examples of his juvenile attempts at drawing? He produced them the other night for Ramassy's benefit and mine. Luckily one of them was meant to be funny, or I should have died. I had just begun to admire it gravely when Quickset explained. I exploded, of course—and he was delighted."

"What is the good of these pathological studies? You would leave neither Lancelot brave nor Galahad pure."

"Just one more," she continued, still tittering. "Ramassy is interested in the birthplaces of famous men, and when he learned that Quickset is an Irishman—which you might tell, by the way, from the carefully concealed traces of the brogue—he expressed surprise,

at which Quickset did not look displeased. Then I struck in, and said there was a large mixture of Spanish blood in the south of Ireland, and that Quickset was probably a corruption of Quixote. You should have seen how pleased the astronomer was with the suggestion."

"No; you are going too far now. It was only his politeness. And after all, if he has his little vanities, Quickset is undoubtedly a great man. He hasn't time, you know, to weed them out; and they are no more a discredit to him than the vulgar necessity of having to take food like ordinary mortals." He won't give me his daughter, the young man thought to himself; but I'm not yet shabby enough to join in running him down.

The contradiction rather exasperated Miss Douglas, and reminded her that in the excitement of talking she had almost forgotten her purpose. Was it not, after all, for this young man's satisfaction that she was making fun of Quickset's foibles? So she said—

"It's very generous of you to stand up for Quickset. I must say I think he treated you very badly."

"How so?" he asked, rather angrily.

"Using you as a shoeing-horn to draw on Napier. The truth is, you know," she continued, as he maintained a gloomy silence, "Quickset wants to found a family. Science is no longer a dreary search for nothing in a haystack. It is a marketable commodity."

"I must really beg of you, Miss Douglas, not to pursue this subject. It is of no manner of consequence to me what he means to do, seeing that, as you know, he has declined to make me a brick in his family building."

"Very well," said she, immensely satisfied, but still malicious, "let us change the subject. Would you like to know his reading of your character? He prides himself, you know, on his penetration."

"Spare my modesty," he answered, smiling. "It is sure to be too flatteringly agreeable."

"He said the other night, when I asked him what he thought of you, that you are one of those young men whose works have plenty of beginning, but neither middle nor end."

"All right. He may lark over my rising walls till he is tired."

"I didn't know you had reached the stage of walls yet. I thought you were still busy with the foundations. I saw a case in the paper the other day which reminded me of you and your fine schemes."

"Very kind of you to remember me. What was that?"

"A man had been engaged to edit a new temperance paper, but after a month or so he was dismissed, on the ground that he spent most of his time in the neighbouring public-houses."

"And that reminded you of me? Great is the power of association."

"No; listen. He brought an action against the proprietor, claiming half a year's salary; and when he was cross-examined about his visits to the public-houses, he alleged that it was all in the way of business—that he went there to gain experience."

"I begin to see the application."

"I thought you would. Think over it. Hundreds of young fellows, since 'Wilhelm Meister' was written, have had the same idea as you. There's nothing original in the idea. Anybody can see life; but to describe it—that's a different faculty."

"Granted."

"I don't believe anything will come of your studies."

"At least there is the pleasure of making them."

"That's considerable, I daresay, in the case of Mrs Darby Rorke. By the way, do you know anything about her husband? He would be an interesting study, I imagine, if you could get hold of him."

"Very, no doubt. But my present companion is so interesting, so unfathomable, that I am content to wait."

"You mean Mrs Rorke?"

"No. I see she has just left." He bowed with mock ceremony.

"Don't try to turn the tables on me, young man," laughed Miss Douglas.

"I am too much crushed. 'Oh, Hamlet, you have set me up a glass.'"

"I must be cruel only to be kind," she returned. "But when

do you really mean to prove that you can do something with your materials? You mustn't think me ill-natured for what I have said," she hastened to add, with a certain tenderness.

"Certainly not," he answered.

"And if I did, there is nothing, after all, so very odious in ill-nature. It is the means of keeping the world alive, of making Duty put its neck to the collar, its shoulder to the wheel. It puts spurs in the fat side of Indolence; it lays a sharp whip on the flanks of Industry. Under its nipping breath Weariness forgets her pains; the Heart, ready to faint, beats with new vigour. There," he added, changing from the subdued declamatory tone in which he had mouthed these sentences, "I make you a present of these excellent ideas for a 'snipe-shot' in praise of Ill-nature!"

CHAPTER X.

"It comes of being idle, I suppose," Millerby half muttered to himself as he walked homewards, setting his teeth like a man under acute pain. Miss Douglas was right in her calculations; she had sprinkled salt into his wounds. He was disturbed,—more than disturbed—in torture: with those gnawing internal pangs which are worse to bear than any purely physical agony of strained or torn tissue, because the innermost citadel of fortitude is occupied by the enemy. The foes are of the mind's own household.

He was in torture and furious with himself, because he could not at once beat down and cast out the tormentor. "What a weak fool I am to be upset by a thing like this!" he thought. "Quickset is quite right. I am molluscos, invertebrate, aimless, purposeless,

foundationless—a mere log tossing about in the sea. Why should he give his daughter to me? I think I could do something great if I had some one to live for, some one to care for, some one to——"

And this in a professional observer!

He walked quickly on, lashing himself with opprobrious epithets, with as fierce enjoyment as ever ascetic felt in applying the whip to his detestable body. Presently there came a reaction. "Well, we shall see whether even a mollusc can't make a fight. Circumstances may develop a little backbone in the creature."

In his excitement this whimsical conceit tickled him. Looking round at the moment, with a smile on his face, he caught sight of Quickset and his daughter passing him in a hansom. Both looked

preoccupied—as if the subject of conversation between them had been of a very serious nature. She bowed to Hugh gravely and sadly. He felt as if she were reproaching him for his smile.

This momentary vision gave a new and more hopeful turn to his thoughts. He read a world of meaning into her sad almost tearful eyes, and the firm set of a face that was habitually bright and radiant.

"She does care for me. She is worth fighting for. I will fight for her, and I will win her," he said to himself. His thought took a fiercer complexion as it passed on to her father, the meaning of whose determined countenance as he sat by her side was not to be mistaken. "Every man for himself. Quickset has evidently made up his mind. So I hope has she, and so have I."

So very fierce and heroic is youth over its little great difficulties.

If he had heard Quickset's remark as they passed, it might have dashed his confidence. That acute tactician lost no opportunity. He knew that half his daughter's uneasiness came from a womanly unwillingness to give pain, and a remorseful feeling that she had encouraged the young man to make love to her, and he improved the moral of Hugh's cheerful appearance. "Don't vex your kind little heart, Grace dear," he said, putting his paternal arm fondly round her. "He won't feel it long. He's as cheerful as ever already. You know that your father would not advise you against your own good. I have lived longer than you, and know people better."

"Yes, father; but you don't know him," she replied in a plaintive tone. All the same, though it was against her will, she could not help half believing. She had

watched her lover talking and laughing with Miss Douglas after her father's snub, while she was silent and sorrowful, and could hardly call a smile to her lips. Quickset was both respected and loved by his children.

As Hugh walked moodily on, he was suddenly aware of the clatter of a cab drawing up by his side, almost on to the pavement, and at the same moment a voice called his name. He turned with a start, and saw the gravely smiling face of Count Ramassy.

"You seem deep in thought," said the Count. "Can I give you a lift?"

"Thanks very much," said Hugh. "Do you know, I am very glad we met, for I was making for the club in entire forgetfulness of my promise about the comet papers. Can you come my way and get them now?"

The Count assented.

"What a very hospitable people the English are!" presently remarked the Count. "I have not been more than a fortnight in London, and I dine out every night."

"Don't ascribe that to your personal attractions, however," said Millerby. "They count, of course; but any foreigner of distinction is asked out a good deal."

"But I am not a foreigner of any particular distinction. You will not even find my name in the '*Almanach de Gotha*.' I am simply an Austrian gentleman, who has travelled a good deal, and takes a particular interest in science. The curious thing is, that, as I told you this morning, I came here without any introduction. They simply take me on trust. On my first interview with Mr Quickset—you know Quickset?—he offered to get me made a temporary member of the Pantheon."

"Ah, but Quickset prides him-

self on knowing a man at a glance."

"Does he?"

"What is your opinion about knowing people at a glance? Do you think it possible? I own I don't. The man who thinks he can tell what is in a man after ten minutes' conversation has still a good deal to learn."

"I agree with you perfectly. You can tell a great deal in ten minutes, if you are a practised observer. You can measure with fair accuracy a person's knowledge in a given subject. In engaging servants, for example, you can tell in a very short time whether they know how to do their work. But how can you tell whether they will do it? They may be quite willing at the moment—eager, in fact, to enter your service, and full of good resolutions; but, as the house-keeper of my hotel said to me this morning, 'Good resolutions won't keep the scullery clean or pipeclay the front-door steps.'"

"I see you have my habit of conversing with everybody you meet."

"An instance in point?" queried the Count, with a significant look.

"You mean of making a shrewd guess after ten minutes?"

"Yes; and of jumping to a conclusion."

Millerby laughed, and the Count continued—"However, you are right this time. I admit the habit. The truth is, you can measure a man's knowledge in a way, after very slight acquaintance; but you may know a man for months, and yet have the most erroneous ideas about his motives. As for divining anything about a human being's will in ten minutes, you know as well as I do that it is preposterous."

"Quite so. It often amuses me to hear the comments made on cases of swindling. We are always amazed that people can have been taken in so easily. It never occurs

to us that we should have been in any danger. We are astonished at the stupidity of the swindler's dupes. Now I believe that the great secret of the swindler's success is, that nobody ever thinks of himself as a possible victim. It is always the public that is gullible—the public—anybody but the wise cogitator on the gullibility of the public. I believe that a man is never in a better mood for being operated on by a clever rascal than when he is reflecting on the stupidity of his fellow-creatures."

"Very true, very true," assented the Count, in a tone of admiring approval. "I have no doubt there is a great deal in what you say."

"And the reason why big towns offer the best field for the enterprising speculator I take to be this: in big towns we are constantly making new acquaintances. It is an everyday experience to come across somebody we have never met before. In this way we lose the natural man's suspicion of a new face—we don't suspect strangers as strangers. In the country, where the population is sparse, and a new acquaintance is an event, we don't take the stranger on trust so readily; we fight shy of him rather, look at his introductions, take time to consider before doing any business, and so forth. It must often have struck you in travelling how very difficult it is to get change in out-of-the-way places. They look at both sides of a coin, bite it, ring it on the counter, hold your notes up to the light, examine every corner of them, and go through all these operations more than once before they finally make up their minds to dole out the change."

"Not very pleasant when you are in a hurry," observed the Count.

"No; that's it. Everybody is in

a hurry in large centres of population. The pace of life is quicker. And in the case of human beings, you can't easily tell a good coin from a bad. There is no hall-mark on the swindler. He looks just like anybody else."

An amused light came into the Count's eyes. "I was just thinking," he said, "how easily Mr Quickset might have been deceived in my case. If I had not been myself, but one of the men who assist me in scientific experiments, nothing passed between us that would have given the least clue to the difference. The assistant probably knows as much as I do. He could have talked just as well, and I daresay looked just as much like a gentleman."

Millerby laughed, and said—"At least sufficiently like to pass muster."

"Miss Quickset is a very beautiful girl," observed the Count, after a pause,—“so fresh, so natural, so unaffected, not in the least a coquette. You don't see such girls anywhere but in England."

Millerby was rather disconcerted by this unexpected remark, and it flashed across his mind that the Count must have heard his secret. He was so put out that he asked, with a forced laugh, a question hardly justified by the terms of his acquaintance with the stranger, desperately seeking in self-defence to turn the conversation and his own thoughts from Miss Quickset:

"Do you think of introducing the breed into Austria?"

A look of sadness came over Count Ramassy's face. "I?" he said, and shook his head.

"Why not you as well as another?"

Tears gathered in the Count's eyes, as turning away his head he said, "My dear sir, you do not know my story."

"Indeed I do not; and I beg

your pardon most sincerely for reminding you of it, since it seems to be a sad one."

"Of course you could not know. My wife died only a few months ago. She died in giving birth to her first child. We had not been married for more than a year."

He seemed so overcome by the recollection, that Hugh repeated his apologies with an air of sincere distress.

"It is I who ought to apologise for my foolish weakness," returned the Count. "One should be proof against passing remarks of the kind. But the circumstances were unusually sad."

He paused for a moment, and then resumed more cheerfully—

"One of my reasons for coming to England is to do what I can to fulfil one of my wife's cherished dreams—the reconciliation of Science and Religion. She had a presentiment before her illness that she would not survive, and made me a most earnest request that if she did not live I would not lose sight of her great object in life. I did not make any vow, you know. To have done so would have been to confirm her in her fears, poor thing. But you can understand that I hold her request sacred—her dying request, as I must now consider it."

Millerby was silent, and the Count continued—

"I daresay you think it an extraordinary idea to have come into a woman's mind?"

"I don't know. It's a natural enough feeling for a woman to have." Millerby thought, though he did not say, that the deceased lady probably had little conception of the difficulties between her desire and its fulfilment.

"With her it was more than a feeling," returned the Count, as if reading his companion's thought.

"She had been very piously educated; but her father was an enthusiastic student of science, and she knew scientific detail as well as I do. In fact she constantly surprised me by the depth and variety of her knowledge—I may almost say gave me a new idea of human capabilities."

"Then had she any irenicon actually in view?" asked Millerby, impressed by the earnestness of the speaker's manner, which had suddenly changed from the ease of a man of the world into something of the grave intensity of an apostle.

"Yes, she had—though I dare say it would strike you as rather slight and shadowy. Her idea was, that if the leading intellects in science and theology knew both sides of the question as well as she did, a common ground would emerge and take clear shape; and with this hope she thought of bringing the leaders together and encouraging serious and intimate discussion of the great problems—confidential and earnest discussion, as it were. I fear," he continued, sadly, "it is only a beautiful dream; but if she had lived, she had such a magnetic power, that she might have gone a great way to realising it. She might have fused discordant elements as nobody else, I fear, can now do. It must strike you as a very wild scheme, I fear?" he concluded, interrogatively, looking steadily at Millerby with a sad smile. "As a man of the world, you must think it very crude and visionary. Should I go on with it?"

Millerby was somewhat uneasy at being pressed on the subject, although the Count's frank appeal for advice in so momentous a matter was not a little flattering. He wished that it had been possible to pass over the question lightly, but this his companion's sorrow

forbade. He hesitated for a time, and then said—

"One would not like to say hastily what is possible and what is impossible for enthusiasm."

"But I can see from your manner that you don't think it possible."

"Well, frankly speaking, I doubt whether it is," said Millerby, with an air of distress.

The Count mused for a little. "Do you know what I mean to do tentatively?" he asked at last. "You will promise not to laugh at me?"

"Certainly."

"I think I told you that I am a temporary member of the Pantheon. Well, I give a dinner there to-night, and I have invited men of science for one half of the party and bishops for the other. I shall place them alternately."

Though taken by surprise at this sudden descent from the sublime to the common, Hugh succeeded with an effort in maintaining his gravity. But his voice was a little broken with suppressed emotion as he replied. "All great events must have a beginning. If a new religion is to go forth from the centre of civilisation, it could not have a more appropriate birth-place than the dining-room of the Pantheon."

"I see you are laughing at me," said the Count, with a sigh.

"I assure you I am quite conscious of the weakness of the tendency. But here we are in Mount Street. Have you time to come up for a little, or shall I bring the papers down to you?"

"I am afraid I shall only just have time to dress for my symposium at the Pantheon. But I couldn't think of troubling you. I will come up for them."

"Don't you trouble to get out," cried Hugh. "I will get them in a moment."

"There," he said, as he handed an envelope into the cab; "you might find the comet not a bad topic to lead on to your serious conversation."

"Thanks. A good idea. I shall

look in to-morrow morning to tell you how we get on. *Au revoir.*"

"See that you draw the bishops well out," shouted Hugh, as he was moving off.

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs Darby Rorke was busy writing, and Mrs Brockley, her discontented mother, was sewing in silence beside her, and the rest of the household had gone to bed. An admirer of the distinguished novelist would have highly valued the privilege of admission to these midnight labours, and would have been more than content to sit by watching the rapid movement of the pen without adding a sound to its faint sibilation, and the regular stitch of Mrs Brockley's needle, and the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece. Each lady had a shaded lamp, and Mrs Rorke's fine head and face never looked more beautiful than when she sat thus in intense absorption.

The beauty of Mrs Rorke's head and face was sculpturesque rather than pictorial. Some people would not have called her beautiful at all, though nobody could have failed to be struck by the sweetness of the expression. It was a large head and a full face, and such beauty as she had was the beauty of delicate lines and exquisitely moulded features. As she sat at her work, the light reflected up from the paper brought into clear relief the contour of the firmly rounded chin and the firmly set mouth, the lips just meeting in an easy smile. Her work was evidently a pleasure to her—the effort just enough to give a certain tenseness to the expression, which remained fixed as if cut in marble.

The face of the mother, who sat and sewed, and paused now to fix a fretfully inquisitive look on the writer, now to look at the fire, and fidget as if she wished to speak, was somewhat of a contrast. It was darker of complexion, and it had been handsomer, though the lines that stood out in the glow of the lamp spoke of anxieties and passions that do not tend to the preservation of good looks. Vexation and perplexity were stamped on her features to-night, and now and then her feelings became so acute that she rocked her body forwards and backwards.

"If I only knew what he was here for," she broke out at last, speaking to herself.

Mrs Brockley resumed her sewing after this ejaculation, which met with no response from the busy novelist. Encouraged by the silence, she continued to utter her thoughts aloud.

"I can't believe there is anything wrong. I can't believe it. He was always such a good boy, Tom—so quiet, so docile, so affectionate. Why did I ever let him go abroad? If he had only gone to Cambridge as I wished! They all said he would certainly be Senior Wrangler. Count Ramassy!"

Mrs Brockley dropped her work and gazed intently at the fire. "It must be some secret mission. Yet why does he not come to see me? He surely could trust his mother. It is all so mysterious,"

she continued, with a sigh, and began sewing again.

For some time the perplexed woman was content to meditate and mutter to herself, but by-and-by this relief ceased to be sufficient. She raised her voice, and addressed her daughter directly—

"Oh, Cecilia, how can you sit scribbling there when I am in such agony?"

Mrs Rorke was so absorbed that she had heard the sound of her mother's voice without attaching any meaning to the words. "Did you speak, mother?" she asked, absently.

"Excuse my interrupting you, dearie," said her mother, in a gentler voice, "but I can bear it no longer. How can you take it so coolly?"

"I must, mother."

Mrs Rorke still spoke in an absent tone, and as if she were trying to hold the subject away from her. It was perhaps fortunate for her that her MS. had to be ready by a certain time. Nothing short of this necessity would have enabled her this evening to get away from family troubles, and pitch her life among the inhabitants of the imaginary world which she was engaged in describing. This world of her own creation was her great refuge. She knew little happiness out of it. Often and often she could not enter it without an effort. At the best of times her mother had an exasperating habit of dwelling upon disagreeables. Affection made Mrs Rorke indulgent to this weakness, and practice had given her skill in changing earnest into game. But it was not always easy to persuade the determined pessimist to look at the bright side of things; and this afternoon a new and alarming trouble had arisen that made the task of the com-

forter, herself very much disturbed, almost impossible.

When she came home from Mr Raspian's with the news that her brother Tom, who was supposed to be in Vienna acting as tutor in an Austrian family—an appointment which he had obtained through Mr Darby Rorke—had been introduced to her as the Count Ramassy, Mrs Brockley had flown into a state of excitement bordering on frenzy. Her first impulse was to rush out at once in search of her son, and obtain from him an explanation of this extraordinary reappearance. She must see him—she could not rest till she saw him; and not knowing where to go, she raved through the house like a lunatic.

Mrs Rorke with difficulty dissuaded her from going straight to Raspian's to get trace of him there. Raspian must know his address, if he was at Raspian's: to Raspian's she would go, and she put on her bonnet for the purpose. She flung it off, and stormed angrily when her daughter suggested that her inquiries might excite suspicion.

"Suspicion of what? You don't suppose that my son is not entitled to bear the name, whatever it is? You don't suppose that he would disgrace us by coming here under a false name? Why didn't you speak to him, and find out all about it? You are always so timid and easily frightened, and always fearing the worst. If I had only been there! Why, oh why didn't I go? I would not have lost my presence of mind."

Unfortunately Mrs Brockley did at her heart fear the worst, and not without reason. Her daughter's marriage with Mr Darby Rorke, a man of good family, the son of a younger son of a peer, though contracted with

Mrs Brockley's free consent, and partly as a result of her diplomacy, had not been a happy one. It had not even secured to Mrs Brockley that entrance into fashionable society which she had expected, and she could talk of her noble relatives only from a distance. For the last four years Mr Rorke had lived abroad, in receipt of a considerable pension from the earnings of his wife's pen. Still he had considerable influence with his mother-in-law, who respected him a good deal more than her daughter did; and when Mr Rorke, being commissioned to find an English tutor for an Austrian family of distinction, had advised Tom Brockley to accept the appointment, and enlarged upon its advantages, she had allowed her son to go, at his own urgent request, and in spite of the doubts and fears of his sister. But though to her adventurous mind the opening seemed a brilliant one for a youth of ability, and she had visions of his rising high in the Austrian service, Mrs Brockley had had some misgivings, and her son's reappearance in London as an Austrian Count, without any previous hint of this advancement, was rather alarming. It was only two years since he had gone out, and letters had come from him at tolerably regular intervals, in which no mention had been made of any change in his position.

What could have happened? Mrs Brockley, when the violence of her first surprise had somewhat subsided, clung desperately to the idea that he might have been sent on a secret mission by the Austrian Government. The head of the family to which he was attached was a political personage of some importance. Tom's abilities might have been recognised. He might have been employed on

some affair of State. He might have received a title in connection with this. But this conjecture, which Mrs Brockley's vivid fancy quickly built up, hardly imposed on her own judgment. Yet it was the only alternative she could conceive to what she dared not think of.

Mrs Rorke was as much pained and mystified as her mother, but habits of regular work had fortified her with greater powers of self-control. She and her brother had been very close friends when he was at home. She had been his guardian angel. For hours after she met him in his new equivocal character, she had been unable to think of anything else, and her mind had been a chaos of conjectures, fears, suspicions, conceivable explanations. But when the hour came at which it was absolutely necessary for her to set to work and complete her stipulated chapters, she had resolved upon a plan of action for next day, and forgotten her personal sorrows in the excitement of fictitious biography.

"How can you take it so coolly?"

"I must."

"Haven't you written enough for one night?" Mrs Brockley next asked. "Don't you think it may after all be a secret mission?"

"Give me one half-hour more, mother dear," said the persecuted writer with a smile, and still in the tone of one trying to hold aloof from a painful subject. "You know I promised to find out where Tom lives to-morrow. I will talk it all over again with you if you give me half an hour more."

Reluctantly reduced to silence, Mrs Brockley resumed her sewing; and the ticking of the clock and the scratching of the pen again became prominently audible.

The half-hour had nearly expired, when suddenly the stillness of the quiet street was broken by the sound of wheels and the banging of the flap-doors of a hansom. Mrs Brockley musingly raised her head, but her daughter's hand never interrupted its rapid travels across the manuscript. Presently a light step was heard outside, followed quickly by a knock, and then both the women started.

"Tom! That's his step and knock!" cried Mrs Brockley. There was in the involuntary cry a mother's eager delight at the prospect of again seeing her son; but a moment afterwards, her face betokened a certain fear of what he might have to communicate.

The mother quickly laid her work aside and ran to the door. The daughter and sister gazed dreamily with her suspended pen in her hand, reluctant to leave the painless world of her imagination and return to sorrowful realities. Mrs Rorke had been so fully absorbed and prosperous in her creations for the last hour or more, that when she came back to everyday life its realities passed through her mind like passionless phantoms, incapable of exciting fear or hatred. She thought of her troubles dreamily and peacefully, and a wave of tenderness flowed over them as she heard the warm tones of her mother's impetuous greeting of the returned equivocal at the door.

The equivocal entered smiling, confident, unperturbed. "Well, Ciss," he said as he came forward, took her face between his hands, and kissed her, "busy as usual." "Good little woman!" he added, patting her on the head. "Your last book's been a great success. I read it in Tauchnitz's. And didn't I brag of it! Why, you're quite at the top of the tree now."

"But I say, Tom dearie," broke in Mrs Brockley, as the flattered novelist still sat passive and dreamy, "where are your things? Don't you stir. I will get the cabman to bring them in." And she made for the door.

"Stay, mother!" cried he. "I haven't brought any things."

"Not brought any things. Surely you mean to stay with us?"

"I may afterwards. I only looked in to let you know I was in London."

"We knew that already," said the mother, with an assumption of sternness. "Oh, Tom, how could you? Where are you staying?"

"I have put up at the St James's. But how have you all been at home? Ciss has not been working too hard, has she? Why, Ciss, scribbling seems to agree with you."

Ciss smiled, and the mother persisted in asking when he left Vienna, and how long he had been here, and what he was doing.

"My dear mother," said he, "I will satisfy your curiosity if you give me time. I am here on a lark, and I have been here for a fortnight, and I am enjoying it immensely, dining out every night with bishops and swells of all sorts."

Mrs Rorke looked at him with sad surprise and inquiry. "Tom, Tom!" said the mother, lowering her voice to its most impressive tones. "What is the meaning of all this? I am afraid Reginald has something to do with this."

"You speak as if he were the devil! I don't see how I could have got my berth in Austria without him."

"Yes," said Mrs Brockley, still impressive. "But why have you left? and where did you get the money to come and live with

bishops and swells of all sorts, as you call them?"

"That's my affair," said he, doggedly and irritably. "I haven't asked Ciss for it."

"Oh, my boy!" cried his mother, beginning to sob, "would you bring your mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? Oh what a life I have led! And my last hope going. Oh, Tom, I've been a good mother to you! How can you break my heart?"

"Well, then," he roared, "I won it at play. Does that satisfy you?"

"Has it come to this?" sobbed the mother, sinking into a chair. "My poor boy!"

"Come to what? This is a nice reception to give to your poor boy! Why should you grudge your poor boy his luck? A fellow can't be always boring at instruments. A fellow must have a holiday sometimes."

His mother's only answer was sobbing, while tears gathered in the dreamy eyes of his sister, thus sharply and roughly brought down to the bitter facts of her existence.

"Well, if you will do nothing but blubber and preach when your poor son comes to see you, I'm off."

"Don't be a brute to your mother, Tom," said Cecilia, softly.

"Then why is she a brute to me? I don't see what I have done to get such a reception as this. By the by," he added, changing his tone awkwardly, "I saw you at Raspian's this afternoon. You didn't happen to mention to anybody that I am your brother?"

"Why?" asked she, looking at him steadily.

"Oh, it's of no great consequence. Only" — he hesitated, forcing a laugh — "for a lark, you

know, I'm passing as Count Ramassy; and it might be awkward if I were at the same time your brother, you know."

"Passing under a feigned name!" shrieked Mrs Brockley, starting wildly up.

"I daresay you're pretty well known now," he continued, ignoring the interruption. "And it might be better if you would not recognise me if you are introduced to the Count, you know. That's a good sister," he added, patting her head once more.

"I will think over it," she answered, firmly.

"Do, and it will be as well for all of us if you come to a right conclusion. Good night, then, mother. I didn't mean to lose my temper. Don't you trouble about me."

His mother threw herself crying into his arms. He set her tenderly in a chair, and went. They heard him shout "Back!" to the cabman; the banging of the flapdoors echoed in the silent street, and the sound of wheels quickly died away.

The two sorrowful women worked no more that night. The mother was voluble in her grief, the sister subdued and silent, even when the mother begged her with many words and tears not to expose her son.

"What a terrible change!" sobbed Mrs Brockley hysterically, sinking into a chair. "What can have come over him? What am I to do? Oh, Tom, Tom, you will break your poor mother's heart!"

"I will write at once to Rorke," she suddenly cried, after prolonged lamentations, which her daughter knew it would be vain to interfere with. "He must have had something to do with this."

REMINISCENCES OF AN "ATTACHÉ."—PART II.

MONTALEMBERT, RIO, NASSAU SENIOR, 1861.

DURING the years 1860 and 1861 it was my good fortune to see a good deal of M. de Montalembert, the man for whom in my youth I entertained the greatest admiration—whom throughout life I have ever considered the most eloquent orator, without exception, that I ever listened to—and a gentleman to whose kindness and considerate attentions I owe some of the soundest advice ever given, and some of the brightest intellectual moments ever enjoyed.

It was in the house of M. Rio that I first made his acquaintance—a house, by the way, which at that time was the centre of a literary coterie much resorted to by those who, though liberal in politics, were essentially believers in religion, if not enthusiastic partisans of the Catholic creed.

M. Rio himself was an accomplished scholar, and the author of a valuable work entitled '*L'Art Chrétien*'; while his life of Leonardo da Vinci is probably the best and the most complete that has yet appeared of the painter.

His amiable wife (an Englishwoman) and his clever daughters were the principal attractions of this cosmopolitan *salon*, to which crowded men like Bishop Dupanloup and "le père Gratry," Montalembert and Cochin, Mrs Augustus Craven and Nassau Senior, besides a host of other celebrities, to enumerate the list of which would be too long.

But Montalembert was the great star that outshone all else; and no one I ever met, with the single exception of the late Lord Beaconsfield, possessed the art of fascinat-

ing the young as the great and illustrious Count, the brilliant author of so many brilliant works.

He spoke French with a slight English accent; and I have often been told, that although no one had ever achieved in the Legislative Chambers such triumphs of eloquence, or ever possessed such purity of diction, Montalembert had never uttered a word publicly without striking his audience at first with the idea that he was a foreigner, though the enthusiasm which he subsequently created soon dispelled any such impression.

His manner was that of a most polished gentleman, but the mobility of his temperament and the impetuosity of his character gave to his conversation and to his gestures an animation peculiarly French, and not at all in accordance with English notions of quiet, pleasing ways.

His constant recommendation was to do all that one undertook with enthusiasm. "Without it," he said, "your life will be a blank, and success will never attend it. Enthusiasm is the one secret of success. It blinds us to the criticisms of the world, which so often damp our very earliest efforts; it makes us alive to one single object—that which we are working at—and fills us, not with the desire only, but with the resolve, of doing well whatever is occupying our attention."

Applied to the men of England who have left their mark upon this century, how true the remark is, and how little Pitt, Fox, Disraeli, Palmerston, Cobden, Bright, or Gladstone could deny the soft

impeachment; while how painful is it, on the other hand, to note the seeming absence of this virtue in the present day!

From him I learnt at an early age to love liberalism in thought, and to detest cordially the French Ultramontane school, at the head of which was Louis Veuillot—a school more papist than the Pope, just as Bossuet was more intolerant than Rome in his day, and which, while preaching submission that nobody contested, was creating a Cæsarism in the Church which nobody wanted or had before attempted. Montalembert never once doubted the authority of Rome in matters of creed—indeed he was a pre-eminently devout subject of the Church—but he contested all his life the encroaching powers of the episcopate in matters concerning the laity; and, true to this view even in his last hour—which occurred in 1870, at the time that the great and last Council was being held in Rome—he protested against the infallibility, not on account of its dogmatic character, but because he feared episcopal interference in the future, and felt that the times were not ripe for such encroachments.

He dreaded, in common with many others, the possible conflict between Catholic creed and the secular power, between the Catholic clergy and the political ideas of the day; and thus on his deathbed he protested against the infallibility as inopportune and impolitic.

Although enthusiasm produces heroes and merit, it must be allowed that it also possesses a few drawbacks.

The mobility of an enthusiastic nature is very likely to give its possessor a reputation for inconsistency, which, once obtained, is seldom got rid of, whether in a lifetime or in the later records of history.

Montalembert, who had been so great an admirer of English institutions, and so true a lover of this country, was, at the time I knew him, a bitter enemy of all that was English.

What had produced the change I know not; but one evening he had spoken so violently against England when I was present, that although he was conversing with somebody else, I could not help remarking to him that it was exceedingly hurtful to my feelings to hear one whom we looked upon as a friend and admirer use the terms he did against us. He turned round sharply, and while apologising for having forgotten that an Englishman was present, began a tirade against all that was going on at the time that even exceeded in bitterness the remarks I had previously thought it necessary to notice.

It was on the 16th of March 1861, and all I knew of Montalembert's opinion of England was derived from his book on our country, which vaunted to the skies the liberty enjoyed by its subjects, the freedom of the press, the old and splendid institutions under which we grew, and the vitality and energy which were the pre-eminent characteristics of the greatest nation of the world. I thought it well to remind Montalembert of this book. Whereupon he exclaimed, "To praise and to damn are almost synonymous. You cannot bestow praise without immediately finding yourself egregiously deceived. I did admire England and its institutions more than anything I have ever considered great, noble, and worthy of imitation in life; but look at her now. Look at Bright and his democrats—*ultima ratio*; look at Palmerston's conduct in Italy, and John Russell's management of for-

eign affairs. Is that governing with a view to safety at home to sow discord abroad? Can you call a foreign policy honest which, taking only into account the rabid dislikes of a few ultras, panders to the ambition of a Garibaldi or the recklessness of a Napoleon? Is that a Government which can be called strong that fears strength in neighbouring Governments? And what name do you think should be given to the men who, urging their own compatriots to loyalty and obedience, encourage their neighbours on the Continent to rebellion and revolution?

"What for? Again I ask, for what object? Is it to make a friend of united Italy, and possess strength in the knowledge that she will have in the future to be grateful for your efforts on her behalf? Nonsense! Lord John Russell sees but the Pope in Italy, and is incapable of grasping the great principle of national cohesion. He has reform on the brain; and because of the part he has played in the Bill of 1832, he considers that he will now be able to reform Italy, and the Pope, and the Italians. Do you call that a statesman? Well, the future will show whether men who temporise and cannot grasp are statesmen—whether the men who, to keep revolution away from English shores, encourage it elsewhere, are men capable of earning in history the name of honest statesmen. 'On ne joue pas avec le feu sans précipiter l'incendie.'

"Quant à Palmerston je vous en fais cadeau. Tôt ou tard on s'apercevra que c'est un talent de second ordre. Nous en avons trop en France de cette catégorie pour ne pas les apprécier à leur juste valeur, mais John Russell en voilà un—"

And, like the red flag to a bull,

he launched at the head of the unattractive Minister such a volley of epithets and vituperative accusations as I scarcely conceived possible any man could decently use against another; and lastly, finished a painful tirade by a warning that sooner or later, but necessarily, we would reap as we had sown—that our negation of all morality in politics, of all principle in government, of all honesty in dealing with our neighbours, would be severely visited upon us—that revolution would soon be rife in England—that democracy was already holding up its head—that the continent of Europe would coalesce against us—and finally, that the objects of our present hero-worship would become those of our loathing contempt and detestation.

I really was quite crestfallen and pained after this exhibition of temper and hatred; and happening to meet Nassau Senior, whom I knew to be a great friend of Montalembert's, told him of the great change which had apparently come over our *quondam* admirer. Senior, who knew Montalembert's turn of mind to a nicety, merely smiled at my anxiety, and said—

"It is only a fit: like other things it will pass off. I have known him long and intimately; he has been everything in turn—Royalist and Republican—and has rebelled against all he has ever professed. His enthusiastic nature requires, apparently, this periodical annihilation of all he has mostly extolled; and perhaps next time you see him he will find nothing in the world more worthy of his esteem than Palmerston, though I doubt his ever admiring John Russell. His buoyant nature likes that which is pliant, and hates settled purpose."

I have since read Senior's con-

versations, which were published, I believe, a few years back; and I remember being much struck with Lamartine's opinion of Montalembert as given to Senior, and reproduced, I am certain, by him from a feeling that the poetic mind of Lamartine was only exaggerating his own estimate of the Count's character.

"He is false, malignant, bigoted, unscrupulous, unpatriotic," said Lamartine to Senior.

He really was nothing of all this, but he was what he strongly recommended others to be—enthusiastic, and this to a degree which amounted almost to mania. Whatever became for the time being the object of his adoration, to that idol must all bow, regardless of the possibility, at no distant date, of the idol being discarded by him altogether, while it became the object of devotion of those he had taught to know and appreciate it.

Have we not in England known more than one instance of such enthusiasts leading their believers to worship them because they knew the simplicity of mind, the ardour of soul, and genuineness of purpose which actuated them, but who by their opponents were characterised as Lamartine described Montalembert, because, like Lamartine, they were ignorant of the man they condemned?

Lamartine's words, bereft of their own malignancy and exag-

geration, might have been truer had they stood thus:—

He was changeable, impulsive, ardent, careless, and desponding.

He defended with all his soul the cause he advocated for the time being, but he often changed sides.

He charged an enemy with a fury that savoured of hatred, but it was never the result of malignant premeditation.

He was an ardent Catholic, but he detested despotism under any form or shape; and his hostility to clerical influence cannot justify a term of bigotry being applied to him.

All to the idea of the moment, he forgot in his enthusiasm the worship he had bestowed on other and sometimes diametrically opposed principles; but a less unscrupulous being never lived—and as to patriotism, he loved his country almost to idolatry, but he certainly never took for his models men like Guizot or Lamartine, a fault which they never forgave him.

On Wednesday evenings when the Countess de Montalembert received, her rooms were full of men who were moved by the most generous impulses and the most patriotic aims; nor was it the least of the advantages derived by the kindness of the Montalemberts that at that time I was allowed to listen to Changanier, Keller, Melun, Dupanloup, Trochu, and St Marc Girardin, in their hospitable house in the Rue du Bac.

A STRANGE OCCURRENCE.

The following I make no apology for giving to the public, nor do I volunteer any comment, as people are divided in opinion as regards supernatural influences at work in the world; and I do not wish to side either with those who alto-

gether disbelieve them, or with those who, like the Rev. Mr Lee in his book 'Glimpses in the Twilight,' credit their existence implicitly.

If I have a duty to fulfil in narrating this episode in my life,

it is to tell the incident as it happened, even in its most trivial and uninteresting details, and leave the reader to form his own conclusions.

On the 19th of January 1865, it would seem by my journal that after dinner I sallied forth to Gray's Inn, for the purpose of rehearsing the "Scrap of Paper," which some barrister friends and myself intended to act in private theatricals which we contemplated.

For some reason or another the rehearsal was postponed; and after an hour spent with my friends—Mr Molloy, the eminent song-composer, being one, his brother, now M.P. for King's County, another, and Mr Schwenck Gilbert a third—I sauntered home.

I had to go the length of Oxford Street and part of Holborn. As I reached Little Queen Street, I was impelled to have a look at the Shoe-Black Home, which, in imitation of Lord Shaftesbury's excellent institution, had been founded for poor Catholic vagrant boys, and in which, being its secretary, I took at the time more than considerable interest.

It was in itself an absurd idea to have a look at the outside of a very poor house in a very shabby street at eleven o'clock at night; but I obeyed the impulse nevertheless, and when I came in front of the house, found that it was lighted up, contrary to all regulations, which enjoined lights to be out by nine.

Having rung the bell, I was answered by the wife of the superintendent—a poor woman, who, for a few shillings a-week, tended to the comforts of the ragged urchins under her care.

To the question why the lights were not turned out, she gave an evasive answer to the effect that her husband had been obliged to

go out, and that she was waiting for him, &c.,—all of which I might believe, as I liked.

I told her I would report the matter to the committee, and left her in great fear lest her dismissal and that of her husband might be the consequence of this breach of the rules.

She appears to have felt it so much that she fell ill; and I never saw her again until a month later, when, being at the "Home" with a sister of mine and the Dowager Lady B——, for the purpose of giving the boys the prizes they had won, the poor superintendent's wife looked so ill and haggard that I asked Lady B—— to say something encouraging, which she did.

Upon this the woman turned to me, and exclaimed—

"Yes, sir, I have been ill, very ill, ever since the night you was here, and you have had no pity for a poor old woman that was sick.

"You were going out to shoot wild duck, and you promised to send me some, but you never did; and for a gentleman to break his promise to a poor woman is too bad—is it not, my lady?"

There was only one conclusion to arrive at—that the poor creature was mad; for it so happened that at that time I had never so much as shot any game whatsoever, much less a wild duck; and my circumstances were such, that even had I been going to shoot anywhere, it is more than probable that I would never have sent this woman any game at all, and very certain that I would not have considered a wild duck as proper food for her.

Be this as it may, on the 18th of March following we received the following telegram from Commander, now, I believe, Captain

Fenwick, then in command of the Harrier:—

"I regret to say that your brother was lost in the Falkland Islands on the 19th January whilst out shooting wild duck."

He was acting-lieutenant of the Harrier, with which ship he had exchanged from the ill-fated Orpheus a month before she was a complete wreck on Manukan Bar in New Zealand, and was on his way home when he met with his terrible end.

We were more than brothers to each other; we were bosom friends, and like one another in face, though not in stature.

Is it possible that the poor woman at the "Home" saw him in her delirium, and took him for me? Did he select the work in which I was most deeply interested at the time to give me warning of his loss on that desolate island?

Again I say, I make no comments, but the facts are as I have related them.

CHEAP DINNER.

Attachés are careless individuals in money matters, and I was no exception to the rule, though I ought to have had every reason to be more careful than most, not being gifted with much at any time.

It happened, however, that on a lovely morning of August 1868, I was sadly distressed by the state of my finances and the exiguous proportions of my cash in hand.

It occurred to me therefore, that having noticed some very clean establishments called "*Bouillons Duval*," I would give myself the melancholy satisfaction of dining there instead of at the club or at one of the great restaurants of the day, *Brébant*, *Voisin*, *Durant*, *Café Anglais*, or *La Maison d'Or*.

Happily for me, I was not to be alone, and the Hon. J. S. joined me on the memorable occasion.

We had an excellent dinner, seasoned with most lively talk and pleasant remarks, which soon made us forget the reason of so much economy.

The *pot au feu* was irreproachable; the *entrée* perfect; the roast excellent; three kinds of vegetables

made us feel the superiority of French cooking; the *entremet sucré* was more than we required; and we never tasted better cheese, nor better fruit as dessert.

We washed the whole down with a bottle and a half of "*vieux Bordeaux*," and we went to the expense of asking for napkins, for which we paid a penny apiece.

The dinner altogether cost us, including wine and fresh linen, 9 francs 40 cents, or 7s. 6d. Deducting from this 3 francs 50 cents for wine, the dinner cost each of us 1 franc 95 cents, or 1s. 6d.

We were quite elated, and resolved to finish the night economically. So we bade good-bye to this clean but somewhat hot establishment, and mounting the *impériale* of the omnibus for *Passy*, we asked for places at the theatre, and were offered "*la loge Impériale*" for five francs apiece!

We thought this so cheap for an Imperial box, that we acceded to the request that we should fill it, and we had the satisfaction of feeling, as we reclined in the spacious box, that we had really done as much with our moderate resources as it was possible for

wise men to do; and having laughed at the suburb actors, we again mounted an omnibus, and by the end of our journey came to the conclusion—that quality was, after all, better than quantity, and, as my companion tersely put it, that

in future we would rather pay a little more for a good deal less, than so little for so much.

We were surfeited with economy: one night of it had been sufficient. But these were days when we were young.

"MURDER OR DUEL" CONSULTATION.

One night in January 1868, I was leaving the Cercle Agricole, a very comfortable proprietary club of which I had but recently been elected a member, and was making my way to the Pont Louis Quinze—as my Legitimist fancies ever made me call what I suppose is better known as the Pont de la Concorde—when I was accosted by a tall and very well-dressed man, who seemed to me to have some great sorrow; and having returned his polite salutation, I waited for him to speak.

He hesitated so long that I remarked to him that it was very cold for us to be standing there without apparent reason, unknown to one another, and at so late an hour, when he broke in with the following somewhat startling remarks:—

"Yes, it is very cold, but colder inside than outside.

"Yes, we are not acquainted with one another, but that is the very reason why I venture to crave a few words with you."

There was something to me so ludicrous in the idea of his bluntly telling me that the only reason why he wished to speak to me was because he did not know me, that, given as I was far more to laughter than to the seriousness of life, it did not at once strike me that the poor fellow might be a lunatic.

Answering him, therefore, in his own strain, I said that I thought

his way of looking at this matter, though novel to me, was quite intelligible, provided he had confidence in my being able to answer him satisfactorily.

His eyes, which up till then had been concealed by the modest and respectful posture he had adopted, suddenly looked up at me with a flash of fire in them which told of passion at work, and with a quivering lip he roused me into fearful interest in him by exclaiming—

"Monsieur, I have watched you for the last ten minutes speaking at the club entrance with an older man than yourself. I have noted that you and I must be of the same age. I have thought that you and I might be in the same distress, not of mind but of purpose and will. I know what to do. I know what I should do; but to think it out is one thing, to do the thing is another.

"Now you are a stranger, you are of my age, you must have the same feelings, the same beating at the heart, the same pride; but while you cannot sympathise with me in what distresses me, because you know nothing about me and my surroundings, still the similarity of our age, health, heart, and feelings must make you an impartial judge. For God's sake, be that judge!"

At this point he had talked so quickly and vehemently, that beyond noticing his fearful earnestness, I had scarcely paid attention

to his whimsical logic; but when he called upon me to be a judge, and thought I must be an impartial judge because I did not know him, I remember being immensely struck with the argument as justification for my appealing to strangers in some of the numerous difficulties which beset my path in life.

I therefore meekly answered, that to be judge I must hear the cause he had to plead; but an incipient feeling that I had better be near a police station in case of necessity, made me add that I would take it as a favour if he would tell me his story walking instead of standing, as we were fast being numbed by the cold; and as he assented, I retraced my steps towards the Place du Palais Bourbon, *alias* du Corps Législatif, near which I knew there was a police station.

As we walked along I was immensely struck by the perfect manners, the grace of movement, the polished tones of his voice and language, and wondered if and where I had met him before. I was on the point of putting some leading questions to him so as to gather something about his belongings, when I reflected over his singular logic, and thought silence alone on my part would obtain his confidence.

When we had walked a few paces, and had got abreast of my club again, my unknown friend said—

"Monsieur, I am in the army—a lieutenant in the army; but that is enough."

"How is it you are not in uniform?"

"Ah, monsieur, that is the question—the whole question: why am I not?"

This rather gave a revulsion to my feelings. I began to be vexed,

and to believe I had to deal with a knave.

"I suppose you are on leave?" I said.

"Permission de quinze jours," he replied; and added—"quinze jours pour tuer mon colonel."

I started. "To do what? to kill your colonel? Who is he, and what has he done, and what the deuce have I got to do with such a proposition, or you with me, that you should openly talk to me of such a project?"

I was wellnigh frantic, when he stopped me with this cool remark—

"Did I not tell you that I know how to do it, but have not the will?"

Was any man ever placed in such a position? I thought. Here is a French colonel's life in my hands, and his murderer awaiting my orders!

At once the gravity of the whole thing overwhelmed me, and I remonstrated with the stranger, that he had no right to place any one wholly unknown to him in such a predicament.

"Does death alarm you?" he asked.

"Not mine, but that of another does."

"Oh, if you are so sensitive, it remains for me to beg your pardon, and to wish you good night."

"But, sir," I said, "I think it somewhat cool to dismiss me with so few words."

"I don't want you to go," he quickly replied.

By this time my mind was made up. I would sift the matter to the end, save the colonel, save the young man, save myself, save everybody, and all by means of the police.

"Well," I slowly remarked, "I am here to listen to what you have to say."

"You cannot mean that, for

you have cut me short every time ; and indeed you, as an unknown person to me, are as bad as those I know."

"Then you have spoken of your project to your friends?"

"Certainly ; but they are so prejudiced that they cannot see the matter in its true light."

"But——"

"Pardon me ; but do not interrupt me any more, for it is getting desperately late, and to-morrow before noon the deed must be done."

I inwardly trembled, but said, "Go on."

"My colonel," began the young man, "wishes to marry the girl I want to be my wife."

"What does the girl say to this?"

"Permettez," he continued ; "the girl knows nothing about either of us, nor need she know anything ; and therefore, thank heaven, she will be spared all thought of both."

This was getting too much for my patience, and yet I was riveted to the ground I stood on from mere and sheer interest.

"Passe pour le mariage," then carelessly remarked the young man. "It may or may not take place ; but here comes the point. In conversation with me my colonel said, 'No nonsense,—you are a lieutenant ; I am your colonel. What I wish is your law ; if it is not, name of a thousand thunders I will make it law,—you hear me?'"

This rigmarole sounded quite awful in French, in the dead of night, and in the voice of my poor friend.

"Pas de bêtise ou nom d'un mille tonnerres," he repeated ; "that is what I say of my colonel. Now I ask you, had he any right to speak to me like that?"

"But were you both speaking

of the lady you just now alluded to?"

"I believe he was alluding to her."

"Oh!"

"And so I called him out. 'Vas te faire pendre,' the colonel replied. I said not a word, but went home resolved to kill that man."

"But," I said, "you told me just now that you knew how you were to kill him, but had not resolved upon the deed."

"Did I?"

"Certainly ; and that is what alarmed me."

"Then I beg your pardon."

"What, then, am I to judge, if you are resolved?"

He looked at me a moment fixedly, and then resolutely.

"Whether he deserves to die the death of a dog or of a gentleman. To fight him, I must resign ; and my family beg me not to resign. In the army, he remains my colonel, and I cannot lay hands on him. Shall I, though in the army, shoot him dead in his bed, on parade, at the mess, anywhere, and be taken up to justify his words?—did you mark them? 'Go and be hanged ;' or shall I resign, pain my family, my dearest and nearest ones—but resign, and call out this unhung rascal? That is the point. I have obtained leave of a fortnight from my regiment. I have brooded on this every minute since, and now we are within a few hours of the decision, which you must take for me, and by which I promise you to abide."

I was not by this time so alarmed as before, and the prospect of selecting a duel, in the choice of a duel and a base assassination, cheered my appalled conscience a little.

"This is a very serious question indeed," I replied ; "and as you

say it is really a question of a few hours only, I will, with your permission, call at the club yonder, where the lights are still burning, and see whether a friend of mine is still there. He has been a soldier, and will give you sound advice. For my part, I am so excited by your narrative, and so truly pained by the desperate grief which overwhelms you, that I could not trust myself to give you as sound an advice as you require. We have been so long together that we have become almost friends, and my desire for your interest might blind the requirements which your honour conceives to be necessary. Walk on to the place, and when I whistle, walk casually towards the club. I will meet you half-way."

All this was duly taken in and acted on. Instead of to the club, I ran to the police station, got a policeman in plain clothes, told him very rapidly my story, walked out with him, whistled, and met my poor friend, whom I was betraying in the interest of humanity.

When I had introduced the two to one another, I bowed politely, and returned to the Embassy—where I ought to have been two hours before—not, however, without hearing the click of the manacles as they were clapped on my

friend's arms, and feeling that I had acted like a cowardly ruffian.

From him no sound came, no protest, not a word of complaint. He walked to the station as erect as a high-born gentleman can who has no dirty action to be ashamed of; while I, in preventing bloodshed, proceeded on my way as if I had forged my best friend's name.

The next day I called at the police office for information, but could not get any. I pleaded my official position as an *attaché* to her Majesty's Embassy.

All I could hear was, that the police and the family of the young man were most grateful to me for being the cause of his apprehension.

"But let me know his name," I begged.

"That, sir, is what we particularly wish to hide. If we tell it you, it will be in the papers to-morrow; and the family of the unfortunate lunatic are too powerful to be dragged into the public press for the commiseration of those with whom they associate."

I never got more information than that; but I was consoled. The case was one which the people mostly interested were grateful for the part I had played in it; and despite his logic, my poor strange friend was a lunatic.

INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE—CONVERSATION WITH MR GLADSTONE.

The latter part of the year 1869 was occupied by the Catholic world in speculation as to the results of the Ecumenical Council summoned at Rome for the 8th of December, and which, it was well known, was intended by Pope Pius IX. to be the last in the great series which began at Jeru-

salem shortly after the commencement of our era.

Assembled to define the doctrine of the Church and to condemn the teachings of those who in the course of history had strayed from it, the Councils of the Church had successively banished from the Catholic fold the Donatists, Arian-

ism, Pelagius, Eutychianism, Origen, the Iconoclasts, the Albigenses, John Huss, Luther, Calvin, and the schismatics.

It was now declared that the spirit of the age had encroached upon Catholicism; that rationalism had entered the heart of so many of its adherents, and undermined the obedience to the ecclesiastical mandates of so many of its children, that it had become necessary to strengthen the supreme authority by establishing a superior tribunal from which no appeal could be allowed, and whose decision should be law throughout the spiritual Catholic world.

To most Catholics there seemed little to object to in the elevation of a belief into the dignity of a creed, for in the Catechism it was always taught that speaking *ex cathedra*,—that is, in the name of the Church,—the sovereign Pontiff could not err, however fallible he might be as a man; but as to the wisdom of weakening the Catholic ranks by the proclamation of a dogma which would shut out of the pale of the Church all those who could not separate in mind the person of the supreme Pontiff from the wise or unwise priest who might in times to come occupy that august position, there was naturally considerable differences of opinion.

In France the archives of the Nuncio's Chancery could tell how earnest and how strong was the opposition to the necessity of proclaiming such a dogma, even in the pious Faubourg St Germain, among the most bigoted religious enthusiasts as well as on the part of the more moderate and deep-thinking men.

Monsignore, now Cardinal Chigi, one of the pleasantest-mannered prelates it has been the privilege of the Vatican to send as envoy to a foreign Court, could only reply

to the many anxious queries which were hourly addressed to him by a cautious "aspettate"; while his clever secretary, the Abbé Lucchiardi, with whom I had many a discussion on this disagreeable subject, was invariably wont to argue that if the Pope was to be declared infallible, and as Catholics we wished to remain within the fold of the Church, it was better to be silent and leave the future to take care of itself.

An argument of his was peculiarly specious.

"It is now a dogma," said he, "that the declarations of the Church are infallible. These declarations come from the Church assembled in Council. If the Council declare that the head of the Church is infallible when speaking in the name of the Church, the Pope himself is bound to accept this decision; and if the Pope himself accepts it, his spiritual children are bound to do the same."

"So far so good," was the reply; "but what about its opportuneness?"

That was the key to the whole Catholic opposition to the dogma; and events proved how the cleverest and most learned Cardinals of England, Germany, France, and the Austrian empire opposed the wishes of Pio Nono on the ground, not of belief, but of prudence.

The Church has spoken, and Catholic mouths are sealed, but in 1869 they had not been closed, and clamour was loud, long, and in many cases uproarious.

The French Government were up in arms, and M. Daru, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Ollivier Ministry, was clamorous for civil intervention of foreign States in the ecclesiastical affairs of Rome, so as to establish at once the point that no decision of the

Council should be binding on the established relations of the Church and State as secured by concordates and conventions; while he was peculiarly anxious to prove that the moment chosen by Rome for the proclamation of such a dogma was not only highly injudicious, but might lead to all manner of complications, which in the interest of peace it was the duty of Governments to prevent by well-marked civil interference.

But the temper of the Vatican soon showed itself by the categorical refusal to allow any lay representatives of any Powers to enter the conclave.

It is not for me to disclose the part which this country took in this great contest between Europe and the Roman clergy; but I may mention, that one morning in January 1870, on copying a despatch which had arrived at the Embassy, I threw up my arms in despair, and considered the infallibility of the Pope a settled matter.

On the 16th March, a week after I had left Paris, I had the honour of being present at a party which Mr and Mrs Gladstone were offering to her Majesty the late Queen of Holland.

In the crowd which thronged the Premier's house in Carlton House Terrace, Mr Gladstone discovered me, and at once began by asking what was thought of the infallibility in Paris.

Full of what I had read and of the feelings of dismay with which I now beheld as a certainty what I had so long hoped might be deferred, I did not quite trust myself in answer, but of all the silly manners of getting out of the difficulty, chose the silliest, and asked whether Mr Gladstone wished me to answer rather as he hoped the reply might be, than as the facts seemed to me to warrant.

I got what I deserved, for in a very irritated tone Mr Gladstone remarked that if he did me the honour to ask a question, it was of course to know the facts.

"Then," I said, "sir, I must inform you that the infallibility is settled, and the dogma is a thing of the past."

"How is that?"

"If France and England are of one mind, and intend to interfere in Rome with the proceedings of the bishops and prelates assembled there, then the result of the Council is a foregone conclusion."

"I do not understand you."

"It is clear that Rome cannot oppose force to laic interference, but she can oppose obstinacy; and as France seems determined to insist on being allowed to interfere with proceedings in which she has nothing to do, since her cardinals are there to represent her in case of need; and if this country, through its Ministers, is anxious to uphold the course France wants to adopt, even though it be done unofficially,—Rome will meet both Powers by the resolve to pass the dogma in spite of every remonstrance."

Mr Gladstone was quite beside himself with excitement.

"I cannot believe this," he said; "I never will," and he left me as abruptly as he had joined me in the first instance.

I had not recovered from the nervous shock of this first conversation, when Mr Gladstone was back again, and making me sit down beside him, asked me most kindly where I was appointed to.

"To Constantinople," I replied.

"Indeed! Then I want you to study two most interesting and important questions."

"Which?"

"But first let me ask you, what

will the French Catholics do if the dogma is proclaimed?"

"Most of them will submit."

"And do they not resent the principle that one man can lay down religious doctrine for his fellow-creatures to believe, and that he is infallible in the righteousness of his utterances?"

"They do not consider the time opportune."

"And do you mean to say that they consider any time opportune for such a doctrine?"

"That is a proposition that can only arise out of the present predicament in which we are situated."

"Well, but are you really stating a fact when you assert that the laic interference of any Power in Europe will be met by obstinacy in Rome?"

"I have no right to put it in those words, but I do maintain that those words indicate most correctly what, in my opinion, will occur."

After a pause Mr Gladstone added, "You have greatly surprised me, and what you say does not tally with what I hear; but I dare say there is a good deal in justification of your surmise. You are going to Constantinople, I think you said?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then study the Armenian and Bulgarian questions."

I went to Constantinople. I studied both questions. The Armenian was a little schism produced in that community by the ill feeling which the elevation of Monsignor Hassoun to the Patriarchate had given rise to, and which would

have collapsed long before it actually did, had not France seen in it an opportunity of regaining her influence in the East, through the medium of Rome and Catholicism; while the Bulgarian question was the means chosen by Russia to work her influence in Macedonia and the Balkans, and by using the desired autonomy of the Bulgarian Church as an incentive to discontent against the Porte, to prepare the disaffection of the Bulgarian subjects of Turkey for the war which came about in 1878.

I may mention here, that talking to General Ignatieff one day of the impossibility of giving limits to a Bulgarian Church so as to satisfy the canon of the orthodox Church which obliged a country desirous of religious autonomy to have also well-defined political limits, the General took me to his room, and pointing to a map of Turkey, said—

"Ah, ils veulent des limites; eh bien, les voilà les limites de la Bulgarie!" and he pointed to the Danube in the north and Salonica to the south.

It is not a little interesting to remark that these were the exact limits of his Treaty of San Stefano; nor is it less curious to my purpose to note that while the obstinacy of the Italian prelates carried the day against what was deemed judicious delay and inopportuneness, as I had mentioned to Mr Gladstone, this great English statesman had sifted in 1870 the importance of two most remarkable religious quarrels in the far East, which were only to have their solution many years later.

FLORIDA: THE STATE OF ORANGE-GROVES.

FLORIDA is one of the anomalies of American progress. It contains the oldest settlement in the Union, and yet to nine out of every ten Americans it is the least known of all the States. St Augustine, on the Atlantic coast of Florida, had echoed the solemn tones of the Mass for more than half a century before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth; but it was left far behind in the race between the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon forces of colonisation. While the Anglo-Saxon in the North was hewing down the primeval forest, driving back the Red Indian, planting cities on the prairie, and digging into the bowels of the earth for coal and iron, the Spaniard in the South vegetated, decayed, and gradually disappeared. Bit by bit his splendid colonial empire slipped through his fingers, Florida among the rest; and the inevitable Anglo-Saxon succeeded to a heritage which only he had strength and energy to rule. Spanish power in the Gulf of Mexico was already on the wane before the middle of last century. In her wars of that period with Great Britain she lost the Antilles, and at the peace of 1765 she considered Florida a small price to pay for their recovery. In British hands its capabilities were for the first time put to the test. A favourable site was selected at the head of the Gulf of Mexico, and a Scottish colony was planted on it, which with Scottish tenacity has held its ground, though circumstances did not favour its growth. Twenty years later, Florida was given back to Spain; but the Scotch colony on Lake de Funiak survived all political changes and

transformations. Its offspring may be met everywhere round the Gulf—as captains of Mississippi steamboats, as flourishing planters, and as prominent members of the State Legislature.

At the beginning of this century the South was the true Land of Promise for Americans. Cotton and sugar ruled the Union. The planters held the key to the El Dorado which then fascinated American eyes. They were the cotton kings, and through cotton they controlled Congress. In every step and incident of the foreign policy of the day their influence may be traced. Their persistence and resolution cleared the Gulf coast of alien sovereignty. They elbowed the Spaniards out of the vast territory which now forms the States of Mississippi and Alabama on one side, and Arkansas and Missouri on the other. In 1805 they secured complete control of the river, by inducing France to relinquish Louisiana. In the first twenty years of the present century this huge acquisition was digested and organised. Missouri was erected into a territory in 1812, only three years after Illinois. Then came Alabama in 1817, and Arkansas in 1819.

The slave line had been sharply drawn at the Ohio, and it was understood between planters and abolitionists that there could be no further extension of slave labour to the North. But, by the same tacit agreement, the entire South was abandoned to it. The planters realised the uncertainty of their position, and never rested until they had secured every foot of land that might be of any future value to them. Florida was the

last of their acquisitions. It rounded off their domain, and made them masters of the Gulf. But sixty years ago they had no practical use for it; its value was purely political and prospective. They had a very low opinion of its soil and capabilities; and while they still possessed millions of acres of virgin soil within their own borders, there was no attraction to draw them to a remote peninsula, celebrated only for its savage Indians and its alligators. Previous to the civil war, Florida was as little known to the average American as Jamaica; and less than either Mexico or Cuba. Even Southerners had a very limited acquaintance with it. The planters had begun to find their way into West Florida, where a marked preponderance of negroes in the population still attests their presence; but they thought of it only in connection with cotton. The peninsula itself was considered useless for cotton, and only a stray planter now and again pitched his tent there. This, in a word, is the explanation of how, though an old State, Florida is still a young and virgin country. It did not fit into the planter dispensation, and its day did not dawn until the rising of a new sun. When slavery and slave labour had been wiped out from the South, admitting the ingress of free enterprise and industry, then Florida found its vocation.

There are in the South certain States which native Southerners speak of, in a half-jocular, half-contemptuous way, as "Yankee States." Georgia boasts that distinction, and is proud of it. She owes it partly to the large and growing influx of Northern blood into her territory, partly to the infusion of Northern habits and ideas among her own people. In

a short time Florida will be more of a Yankee State than even Georgia. It is Northern men who have laid hold of her and raised her as it were from the dead. It is Northern capital which winter after winter overruns the State like a flood, leaving it enriched, and better than ever satisfied with itself. It was Northern farmers who came down and looked at her sandy soil, and thought there was more in it perhaps than met the eye. They tilled it scientifically, fertilised it, and discovered its latent capabilities. After the first success, they came south in shoals, bringing with them their rare qualities as agriculturists—shrewd observation, watchful care, and unceasing industry. They indulged their passion for experiment by introducing new plants and new modes of culture. By studying the climate and the soil, they have produced an orange which is not to be mentioned in the same breath with ordinary oranges. It is a delicacy by itself, hitherto unknown to the world, and which Spain need never attempt to rival. Between an Indian River orange and the coarse-grained, spongy, bitter-sweet product of the Mediterranean, there is nothing whatever in common. The one is a thing to be eaten in the usual routine of life, the other is a delicacy which we can only hope to stumble on at rare moments. A ripe Floridian, well grown, and in good condition, melts in the mouth like a juicy peach. It is nectar in poetic form; and the fashionable mode of eating it in Jacksonville is to cut it in two and empty it with a teaspoon. So delicate is the pulp and so tender the skin, that the one difficulty in enjoying it is the handling of it.

But it is rather early to be getting into ecstasies over the Florida

orange. We mention it now only in passing as one of the curious accidents that helped to lift Florida out of the mud. There were many others, and all of them more or less peculiar. Florida owes a great deal to her rivers as well as to her orange-groves, something to her hotels, not a little to her railways, a little more perhaps to the zeal of a patriotic press, and most of all to her balmy winters. They are her strong point, even above and beyond the inimitable orange. They have captivated the Northern Sybarites, who, as regularly as October returns, flee south by thousands from the rigour of their native frosts and snow-storms. It is estimated by the Floridians themselves that in the past season they had about 150,000 winter visitors; and a considerable grain of salt may be struck off and yet leave a handsome total. The entire force of the native population, white and coloured, is not much more than a quarter of a million. Put down a visitor for every two natives, and assume that he spends on an average a pound per day,—the real average will be rather more, for Florida hotels have “orange” tariffs as a rule, and Florida railways are not yet reduced to three cents a mile. Suppose, again, that each visitor stays on an average a couple of weeks—many remain through the winter, but, on the other hand, others are merely flying excursionists who can spare only a few days—two weeks at £125,000 per day would yield a million and three-quarters sterling. This Florida owes entirely to her climate, which practically knows no winter. Even on the St John’s River, which is in the northern part of the State, frost only occurs now and again. A proof that it cannot occur often is, that it would kill the oranges, and their culture would

have to be given up. Last winter was unusually cold, but the mean temperature of the five months from November to March inclusive was at Jacksonville 58°.7—eight degrees higher than the corresponding mean at Cannes, nearly nine degrees higher than that of Nice, and two degrees above Los Angeles, in Southern California.

A “mean temperature” may represent very different things in two different countries. In one, it may be the medium between widely diverging extremes; in another, it may be the average of a nearly uniform series of observations. It is so in Florida, where the winter temperature is not only mild, but equable. It rarely rises above 70°, and seldom falls to 50°. Many less privileged parts of the world would be thankful for such a summer as the Floridians have for a winter. From the Sybarite point of view, it has a still more rare advantage in its comparative dryness. In tropical countries the winter is generally the wet season, and what it lacks in cold it makes up for in damp, and a general atmosphere of rheumatism. But Florida has its rain in summer. At Jacksonville they register from 50 up to 65 inches of rain per annum, the average being about 54 inches. More than two-thirds of the total fall occurs in the months of June to October inclusive. In November and December the fall is frequently less than one inch; and from January to April it may be as much as 7 or 8 inches in a wet winter, but it is quite as often under 4 inches. This combination of genial warmth and dryness is the essence of the Florida winter. Men shivering in a climate that is simply a long succession of frosts and thaws, storms and slushy streets, found it almost impossible to realise the vision of a

land of winter sunshine, where the mercury stands serenely for weeks together in the neighbourhood of 50°. Years ago a few of the New England millionaires had an idea that some such Happy Land was to be found on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. But it was not easy to get to. As yet there were few iron roads penetrating so far south as Florida. There were steamers running down the coast to Havana, and thence up the Gulf by Key West to Cedar Keys; but it would have taken longer to get to Cedar Keys or Jacksonville by land, than to sail first to Cuba and then back to Florida. When Florida was first spoken of as a sanatorium, it was to Cedar Keys that wealthy valetudinarians flocked; for there was as yet no direct route to any other part of the State. The Atlantic coast, though it was dotted with well-known towns like Fernandina, Jacksonville, and the grand old Spanish settlement at St Augustine, was inaccessible. It lacked railways; and railways could not be built, for the State was bankrupt, and private capital was as rare as ice on the St John's River.

Within the past four or five years Florida has got railways, and they have made all the difference in the world to her. They have given her a new birth, and brought her legions of winter visitors, armies of Northern settlers to cultivate her once despised pine-lands, and crowds of speculative financiers to see what they can do in the way of helping her to develop her resources. Jacksonville, the commercial capital of Florida, is now connected in the winter season with New York by four or five express trains daily, running the distance in thirty-six hours. It has, besides, express services to New Orleans, *via* Pensacola and

Mobile, and to the west and north-west by the many roads crossing the States to Cincinnati and St Louis. From an out-of-the-world one-horse town, Jacksonville has sprung all of a sudden into metropolitan importance. It enjoyed the advantage of having a few spirited citizens, who could recognise a great opportunity when they saw it coming to them. They had the natural instinct for a boom, and knew exactly how it had to be nursed and fostered. First, there were the inevitable hotels to start. The best men that could be tempted down from the North were invited to take the management of them, and almost without exception they were a success. Season after season they have grown in number, in size, and in prosperity. Every winter the rush of visitors is larger, visitors linger longer, and the season stretches out, till this year, instead of ending in March, it has extended far into April. A thriving well-managed hotel is the keystone of the American social system. In a young and rising section it hardly yields in importance to the equally inevitable railroad. Its prosperity is an unerring gauge of local progress. Any misfortune to it—a fire or a bankruptcy—is mourned as a public disaster. The more bedrooms it adds on, and the more drinks sold at its bar, the bigger a man every individual citizen feels himself. If on the other side this remark be suspected of sarcasm, plain facts can be adduced in illustration of it, which are even more sarcastic. Florida, in common with all young States in the advertising stage, proclaims its hotel lists on the housetops. Every caravanserai is recorded in its guide-books as a public institution, with the name of its proprietor, the number of guests it can accommodate, and

its rates of board per day or per week.

The Florida hotels have proved themselves worthy of the popular favour and encouragement showered on them. They have done their part in the creation of "the Italy of America." The rivers and the steamboats have ably seconded them. Florida rivers are institutions as remarkable as the balmy winter or the golden orange-grove. Like everything else, they are a surprise to the open-mouthed, simple-minded tourist. He expects to see nothing near them but mangrove-trees. When he is conducted from the railway depot to a line of busy wharves and piers jutting out into a stream nearly a mile broad, he may be apt to rub his eyes in astonishment. Before he has recovered from his first surprise, he finds himself under the lee of a huge river-steamer, towering deck on deck high in the air, its broad beam and its side wheels covering half an acre of water, and every plank gleaming with white paint as fresh as if it were laid on every morning. Going on board, he may promenade on the boiler-deck, one side of which is gallantly reserved for ladies; or he may climb up to the saloon-deck, and there throw his weary limbs among velvet cushions. But if he be an experienced traveller, he will permit himself no self-indulgence till he has interviewed the purser and secured a berth for the night. The berths are ranged round the saloon, and, so far as they go, they are admirable, but in the season they seldom go far enough. Boat has been added to boat, and line to line, but the crowding last season was greater than ever before. Floating palaces have been brought down from the Hudson river; special steamers, a little after the style of the Clyde

Columba, with dining-saloon downstairs, have been built in Pittsburg. Arks, which might have been piloted by Mark Twain in his "cub" days, have been imported from the Mississippi. Where a few years ago the traffic could hardly sustain a floating orange-box making two trips a-week, there is now a splendid fleet of steamers running twelve or fifteen trips a-day up and down the river.

The foreign visitor to Florida has, at first sight, a few allowances to make; but when that is done in a sensible way, he enters into a course of enjoyment as exhilarating as it is new and original. Should he travel by one of the coast railways, he finds the change from the depressingly monotonous pine-woods and palmetto-scrubs of Lower Georgia inspiring. His approach to the Florida frontier *via* Waycross on the Savannah, Florida, and Western road, is heralded by the appearance of neat clearances among the pine-woods. Villages have been dropped down, as if ready-made and fresh painted, among the trees. Gardens have been planted; patches of Indian corn are being sown; and peach-trees are throwing out their first bloom in a sun-cloud of pink and white. An orange-tree may be seen now and again, but in a youthful and experimental stage, as it is still too far north and too much within reach of nipping frosts to risk a regular orange-grove. The beauty of the landscape is in the wild woods, which glow with every shade of verdure, and seem to contain every form, even every eccentricity, of vegetation. Side by side the clean straight-stemmed pines, the palmetto, with its bright silvery trunk shining in the sun, and the cypress, festooned with long weepers of moss, grow together. The queenly magnolia does not

hold herself so cheap, and is less frequently visible; but whenever she comes in, she gives dignity to the scene. At intervals this rich belt of tropical vegetation vanishes quite suddenly, and in its place comes a long stretch of scrub palmetto—dry baked-up land—on which the palmettos seem to grudge space for a blade of grass. It will very probably change into a swamp, on which mangroves and saw-grass run riot together. Nothing could seem more hopeless or discouraging to an agriculturist; and yet a day is coming when Florida may find her greatest wealth in her reclaimed swamps. Though they look as if they belonged to the third or fourth day of creation, their turn is believed to be coming,

Through a wild tangled country, thus seen as if it were in the twilight, we make our entry into Jacksonville, the commercial and social capital of Florida. The town stands on the now famous St John's River, and we are approaching it from the west side. With one exception—the line from Fernandina to Jacksonville, which comes from the coast—all the roads here take an easterly direction, as they have to bend back from the interior toward the coast. Our proximity to the river is indicated by the running of the train across streams and gullies, all flowing southward, also by the sand-dunes spreading themselves out treeless and almost grassless by the wayside. But the river itself is hardly seen until we get quite near the depot, and find ourselves within a few yards of its banks. After scrambling out of the depot, one good look round takes in the greater part of Jacksonville. Behind us to the westward, civilisation has as yet made very little impression. The virgin forest has been cut off as with a

knife, and a line might be drawn between city and wilderness. In front is unmistakable city—a vista of tapering masts, reaching far down the river; piers running out into the stream, and broad wharves lining its north bank; the pilot-houses of great white steamers perching themselves in mid-air, funnels smoking, bells ringing, niggers singing and laughing at their work, everybody busy and apparently all flourishing. To the left is a row of houses and gardens, reflecting a phantasmagoria of colours in the bright clear sunlight. The dark foliage of the trees blends with red tiles and grey shingles, and the blue and white of the stripes and stars, which wave from many a flag-staff. After Savannah and Charleston, Jacksonville is a stimulating sight. Its older neighbours, who may not feel altogether charitable towards it, speak of it as a Yankee city, and so it is. Undoubtedly it shows its parentage in every line and feature; but that is not an incurable fault, and does not altogether neutralise its natural advantages. It cannot, at all events, be said that St John's is a Yankee river. Whatever Jacksonville may make of itself in its zeal to suit the tastes of its northern patrons, it will not, we should hope, be able to disguise the Floridian beauty and novelty of the great stream which flows past its door. The St John's is too big a thing to be transmogrified by fancy boats and tram-roads and land-agents' offices. Amid all the changes which the past ten years have brought to it, it flows on as placidly and as grandly as ever. While it remains so, Florida will be secure of its most attractive and most characteristic charm. It is the Hudson river of the South.

The main stream of the St John's has a length of over 200

miles. For nearly half that distance it is a noble river, broader than the Thames at Gravesend, and throwing the Clyde altogether into the shade. It sets up, we believe, for a rival of the Danube, but that is rather overshooting the mark. Its estuary is a magnificent reach of water about twenty miles in length, and extending from the Atlantic coast up to Jacksonville. Like most Atlantic rivers, it is afflicted with a bar, to which the attention of Congress is very assiduously directed when the annual scramble for "appropriations" comes on. It is a mere trifle of a bar—in the opinion of the Floridians—and a few hundred thousand dollars would cure it if judiciously applied. So, at least, every visitor to Jacksonville is assured by optimist natives. But for the present it is an ugly factor, and has to be submitted to. The little that has already been spent on it seems to have had a good effect, for vessels drawing ten or twelve feet can now come right up to the wharves at Jacksonville. In the Atlantic coasting trade ten or twelve feet of water goes a long way, and on the strength of it Jacksonville now considers herself a good second if not a first class ocean-port. At this point the St John's takes a graceful curve, changing its course from east and west to north and south. It is the only instance on the American continent of a great river flowing from south to north; but the darkest mystery about it is where it finds the enormous volume of water which it pours into the Atlantic. It has no traceable connection with the series of lakes which drain to the southward. It has no important feeders, unless there be underground streams feeding the great lakes it passes through. It is not the main artery of any extensive

drainage area, for it rises within a few miles of the very ocean into which it discharges itself, and is never at any time more than fifty or sixty miles distant from it.

Avoiding geology as a perilous half-acquaintance, the simplest explanation we can offer of the St John's River is, that it forms the connecting channel of a chain of extensive lakes which drain the greater part of Upper Florida. Even where it is a broad rolling stream, the lake-contour is still discernible. It never flows smoothly on between straight banks like a well-constituted river, but it opens out into wide bays, and narrows again at irregular distances. In the narrow parts the banks rise into bluffs, which are chosen spots, greatly run on for orange-groves, truck-gardens, or sites of Capuan villas. Many such bluffs were long ago bought up, and are being kept out of the market, with a view to new townships when the right moment may arrive. Jacksonville itself is built on one of them; but unfortunately it has not made the most of its opportunities. One cannot, with strict accuracy or justice, say of it that it is "without form and void"; but it might, with a little municipal foresight, have shown a better front to the river. Its founders evidently considered business first and beauty afterwards. In the matter of wharfrage, it seems to have been first come first served. Piers were dumped here, there, and everywhere, at the caprice of the builders. They were made long or short, straight or crooked, elegant or stumpy, just as the proprietor had a mind. In their appurtenances there has been corresponding exercise of free-will. Some of them have attached to them handsome warehouses and bustling offices, while others lead into blind alleys

flanked with shanties, oyster-saloons, and negro cookhouses.

Jacksonville has jumped too suddenly into fame and prosperity. If its good fortune had come more gradually and given it more time for preparation, it would have been better fitted for the distinction that has overtaken it. What a magnificent embankment it might have had along the front of the bluff, simply for the planning and the laying out! The foreshore might have had to be filled up and raised to a uniform level, but that would have cost little compared with the resulting benefit. Then its main street might have been laid out in the form of a crescent facing the river, and enjoying all the inestimable advantages of the river breeze, to say nothing of the prospect. It might have been a *boulevard* of Parisian grace and more than Parisian beauty, instead of being, as it is, a prosaic double row of brick buildings. Bay Street, as it is called, is a bustling thoroughfare, broad, level, and live-looking from the American point of view. Its one fault is, that it has no adaptation either to the climate or to the situation. People do not go there from the North to see a repetition of the half-made thoroughfares they have left behind them, with the sand-holes, the horse-cars, and the flaring signboards all faithfully reproduced. They look for change, and cannot have too much of it. They expect cities and towns to match the country, reflecting its semi-tropical luxuriance, gaiety, and *abandon*. In Florida there are many such places among the younger settlements, but Jacksonville was evidently planned on the old lines. If its main street could be built over again, clearing away the river-side, and turning its site into an esplanade, one's first im-

pression of Jacksonville would be worthier of Florida and of the St John's River. The back streets are very much prettier than the pretentious main thoroughfare. They are laid out on a rising slope, all at right angles, of course; but their width, and the pleasing variety of their architecture, redeem them from monotony. Every street is bordered with trees, which are carefully tended; and though most of them are young, they already furnish agreeable shade.

These shady back streets are preferred to the main thoroughfare—and wisely so—by the banks, hotels, and merchants, whose business does not require them to be near the river. The banks and commercial offices do not as yet make much architectural display, but the hotels help greatly to set off a good street. They are generally huge blocks of buildings standing close to the side-walk, but surrounded with broad verandahs, which protect them from the noise and glare of the street. Life may be made tolerable in them with the thermometer at 95° or even 100°, but the making of it is an art. The American hotel-keeper is one of the few who understand that art, and practise it systematically. Even in the warmest weather there is a sense of shade and coolness in a big hotel. The broad verandahs ward off the sun. The large vestibule or hall, in which guests lounge and talk business, in which also the clerk has his office, and keeps his staff of negro messengers at hand, is made a centre of ventilation. From it branch off wide corridors and broad staircases. Away at the back, on the coolest side of the house, and if possible opening on a sheltered garden, will be the dining-saloon. Not only is everything made as cool as may be, but everything looks cool. There is no bustle, or

noise, or confusion permitted. The very negro boys are subdued and pacific, as if the majesty of order had touched even their harum-scarum minds. The ruling idea is, that whatever a guest can possibly want is to be ready waiting for him at all hours of the day or night. From six o'clock in the morning till bed-time he can eat. Be it breakfast, lunch, dinner, or supper, there will be something on the table. In order to post his letters, or to buy a paper, or to telephone to a friend, or to send a message, he has only to walk into the main hall. For a wash, a shave, boot-cleaning, hairdressing, or the relief of his corns, he has merely to sit down on a chair, and the appropriate artist will be at his side in a minute. They all understand their business, whatever it may be, and no time or labour is wasted in explanations. The guest knows beforehand his own share of the programme—what he will have to eat, where he will have to sleep, and to a cent what he will have to pay.

In the best-managed hotels on our own side of the Atlantic, the element of strangeness and uncertainty has not yet been altogether eliminated. A person never knows exactly what may happen to him; how he may be treated or what he may be charged even at a house which he frequents habitually. But the American hotel sets your mind at rest forthwith. For so many dollars per day you are free of the house and all its privileges, which, apart from the eating and sleeping, are very considerable. This kind of caravanserai-life is well adapted for a country like Florida. To the well-plumaged birds of passage who frequent Jacksonville, a good hotel means bringing with them all the comforts and luxuries of their own

homes. It is perfectly natural that hotel-life should have had a strong development, and the town benefits thereby in many ways. The hotels are among its finest buildings, and they are yet only a shadow of what they may become as the Florida "boom" progresses. They contribute to the beautifying of the streets, and their managers are, as a rule, very public-spirited citizens. A still more notable instance of their power in a community like this is to be seen at St Augustine, which is setting up as a fashionable rival of Jacksonville. Till lately it was only an old Spanish fort with an old cathedral, and a few fossilised houses clustering round them; but last winter it blossomed out into a tropical Scarborough. It is about fifty miles to the south of Jacksonville, standing of course on the coast, on presumably the very spot where Menendez landed, and caused Mass to be celebrated under the magnolia-trees on Easter Sunday 1565. It is also claimed by the Floridian mythologists that Ponce de Leon's landing, half a century earlier, took place on Easter Sunday. The object of both theories is to get a poetic etymology for the term Florida, by associating it with the Roman Catholic *Pascua Florida*, or Feast of Flowers; but these speculations will have less interest for foreign readers.

St Augustine may be dubious in its archaeology, but in itself it is a very important and agreeable fact. The road to it from Jacksonville lies across a ferry on the St John's River, and then along a narrow-gauge railway, running through the pine-woods for a distance of fifty miles or more. This road is another of the characteristic institutions of young Florida. When projected it was considered a harebrained enter-

prise. St Augustine, its terminus, contained only a few hundred souls, and the intervening country was almost as bare and unsettled as in the days of the Spaniards. There might have been a few old plantations half cultivated, and a nigger homestead here and there in the pine-woods; but that would be all. The projectors got into difficulties, as usual in such ventures, and had to go north for help. Only one man, it is said, a banker in Boston, would look at their security. Against the advice of his friends, he went into it pretty heavily. In fact he finished the line, and became the principal owner of it. Two winters ago it was opened, with a very modest rolling-stock and a severely economical staff. To the surprise of every one, it was a rapid success. Almost from the first day it paid its working expenses; and the first season, though limited to five months, showed a good balance. In the summer months it was reduced to one train per day. The second winter came round, and meanwhile St Augustine had been growing. It had now three big hotels, the largest accommodating 300 guests, and the other two about 200 each. Villas, boarding-houses, and schools had also started up, like Jonah's gourd; and St Augustine set up as the Naples of the American Italy. This latest boom was a grand triumph. The one-horse railway was overwhelmed with passengers. It put on more cars, and ran excursion-trains at a dollar a-head for the round trip. Excursionists started up in crowds, and several trains a-day had to be run to accommodate them. That little road, before it was two years old, was the best paying, if not the only paying, line in Florida. It was reported in March last to be

clearing five hundred dollars a-day of net profit.

St Augustine can lodge a couple of thousand visitors comfortably, and it was crowded all last winter. Among its guests were a number of American lions of the first class. Edison, the electrician, came down early in the season to recruit, and remained several months. Instead of finding the climate too relaxing, he complained a good deal of the wet and cold; but last winter was exceptionally bad in Florida, as in every other part of the States. Before returning home, he indulged in a curious escapade. By way of adventure, he proposed to his friends to finish up with a cruise in the Gulf. They agreed, and the party started for Cedar Keys, where they hired a small schooner. In this they coasted down to Tampa, then to Sarasota Bay, and on to Charlotte Harbour. While he was smoking his cigar under the verandah of the hotel at Punta Rassa, he saw a gentleman and his family putting off in a sloop. It struck him that they were starting on a queer voyage, and he asked where they were going. "Up the Caloo-sahatchee," was the reply. Finding that he could have a glimpse of this unknown stream in a couple of days, he changed his course for Fort Myers, a Rip van Winkle settlement about twenty miles up the river, on the site of one of the old forts built to watch the Seminole Indians. On reaching the little town, he took so kindly to its solitude and its charming old-world ways, that it seemed to him the very place for a winter home. The local land-agent eagerly submitted to him a list of the eligible "lots" that were in the market, and before he had been twenty-four hours in the place, he was one of its freeholders. He went off, promising to return next year and do

great things for Fort Myers. A Florida branch of his laboratory, including a forty-horse power engine and an electric lamp to illuminate the bluff, are among the boons expected from him; but Mr Edison's plans are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians: they may have been changed several times before next winter. But he was a social attraction for Fort Myers, and also for St Augustine, while he lasted.

Apart from its nomadic associations, the old Spanish fort at St Augustine is a thoroughly interesting spot. It is kept in admirable order by the United States Government, and the Americans are getting up quite a keen feeling of veneration for it. One can imagine what it needs to breathe into a New Yorker, fresh from a big deal in cotton "futures," or into a Chicago man, whose mind is running on a possible "corner" in wheat, a genuine sense of antiquity. They have it here without doubt, and the day may come—indeed it does not seem to be far off—when the cradle of the Inquisition in North America may be a shrine visited by thousands of pilgrims for every one who goes to Plymouth Rock. At the time of our visit it was overrun with sight-seers. They clambered over the crumbling walls, gazed wonderingly into the half-filled moats, and climbed up into the old grey towers with as reverential zeal as if they had been doing Melrose or Dryburgh Abbey. In our own case it took a long while to overcome the oddity and incongruity of the fort with its surroundings. Imagine on one side of a road a palatial hotel, run up within the past six months, with its elevators, electric bells, telephones, ice-water, and stock quotations direct from New York; on the other side, the grass-

grown ramparts, where Spanish halberdiers kept their solitary watch three centuries ago—the old grey walls that were battered by the guns of Sir Francis Drake in 1586—the silent sepulchral courtyard echoing the tramp of generation after generation of soldiers, now all at rest together in the vaults below. It is an eerie and at the same time a fascinating sight the old fort of St Augustine. The view to seaward from its turrets is hardly less impressive. It stands right on the water's edge. A couple of miles from shore is a long low "key" or ridge of land, running in a straight line parallel with the coast. It has no visible opening, though we believe there are one or two available for fishing-boats and small steamers. The inside water has consequently the appearance of a long narrow lake, extending on the south side further than the eye can reach. These elongated "keys" are a peculiar formation on the Atlantic coast of Florida. They form a series of inner channels all the way down, some quite narrow, and others of considerable width. The largest and most famous of them is the Indian River, now coming into note as the finest orange-growing country in Florida. Though it is a long way south, and there is no direct communication with it either by railway or steamer, it is already well settled up. One or two roads are being built down to it, and when they are opened the Indian River people "calculate on having a boom."

The Spanish *régime* at St Augustine has left a variety of other traces than the fort. There is a *plaza*, and an old church, and a meandering narrow street lined with pigeon-holes of shops, in which swart-faced men sell sea-beans, alligator-teeth, and orange-tree walking-sticks. They may have been at

one time in perfect harmony with the fort, but now they are a strange collection of anachronisms. The American eagle has taken possession of the owl's nest, and white-washed it, trimmed it up, and hoisted the stripes and stars over it. An artesian well is being bored in the little narrow lane where the Jesuits walked in the shade of the overhanging gables. Mule-teams browse on the ancient *plaza*; and a brick store, where you can buy anything from a pound of hominy to a fire-engine, has planted itself *vis-à-vis* of the Spanish cathedral. At some distance from the town is the United States barracks, which furnishes smart officers in blue and gold for all the pleasant duties of the modern cavalier. There is, in truth, no excuse for *ennui* about the modern St Augustine. Whatever the holy fathers and the Castilian halberdiers of three centuries ago may have found it, one could not wish now for a prettier corner to do his lotus-eating in. Wander in any direction, or simply take your stand at a street-corner, and gaze idly at whatever may come along, you are sure to be interested. The faces of the people are a study. You may be familiar with all the usual types of feature in the South—the Caucasian, the Negro, the Indian; you may think you have seen specimens of every possible complexion that can be produced by the crossing of the white and black races,—but there are people here who will puzzle you. The mulatto, the quadroon, the octroon, the creole, are all in evidence. That bronzed, strong-featured face has changed very little since its ancestors quitted their native plains of Andalusia. A minute later you see it in a lower form, degraded by some mixture of half-caste Cuban blood.

Now and again a face goes past

which can be classed neither with Celt, Saxon, nor Negro. It is fine-featured, sallow-complexioned, and has dark stealthy eyes. "A Turnbull negro" will very probably be the answer given you if you ask what the owner is. "Turnbull negroes" are the forgotten and neglected dregs of a peculiar emigration experiment that was made during our brief occupation of Florida last century. The new race of planters who started up on the peninsula could not get negro labour in sufficient quantity. In their endeavours to find a substitute, they came into communication with Mr Turnbull, then the British Minister at Madrid. He sent out to them several cargoes of Minorcans, Moors, Greeks, and other human waste from the Mediterranean. They were indentured in a way which made them little better than slaves; in fact the negroes looked down on them as a bad imitation of the real article. The experiment was not carried far, and perhaps not more than a thousand or two altogether went over; but they remain to this day a distinguishable class in the districts to which they were assigned. Like minorities generally, they are held in poor esteem; and they have none of that grand virtue of self-respect which distinguishes the Spaniard. Amid all the bustle and the froth of the new St Augustine, the Spaniard sits passionless and *nonchalant*. He may be seen pure and unadulterated in some of the odd corners of the town. One day, tired of strolling round and looking at nothing in particular, we espied the sign of a restaurant on a queer-looking green-jaloused house-front. Lunch suggested itself, and we went in. There were two rooms—one on which the street-door opened, and a second opening from

the first. Both were filled with small dining-tables, covered with red damask cloths. A little cotton damask napkin of the same hue projected from every tumbler. On a chair alongside of a stove between the two rooms sat a swarthy, rather sad-looking man, of something more than middle age. He rose slowly as we entered, and pointed out to us our seats. Guests are not supposed to seat themselves anywhere in America: they have their places pointed out to them, except on the cars, where the law of pot-luck prevails.

Without a word of inquiry as to our special and individual wants, Don Caesar withdrew by a door at the back to the kitchen. He had evidently a very short way to go, for the sounds of cooking were quite audible through the open door. In a few seconds he returned, bearing small plates of soup and bread, which he arranged on the table before us according to a geometrical plan that he must have carried in his head. Having accomplished this, he withdrew to his chair, rolled a new cigarette between his fingers, lighted it, put it in his mouth, and turned his attention toward the street-door. He could not be said to look out, for he was evidently not seeing anything: his eye was turned inward, and he was meditating. On seeing the soup disposed of, he rose leisurely and carried out the plates, returning with three or four more for each guest. These he arranged in a curve round each cover, and, still as grim as a Don Quixote, betook himself again to his chair. The dessert followed at its proper interval, and the reckoning was a fittingly laconic operation. He rose and held the door for us to pass out. "How much?" said the first of the party. "Seventy-five cents each," replied

the Don; and as we turned the corner, we saw him relapse into his chair and pull out his tobacco, preparatory to a fresh cigarette. While he lives, there will still be somebody left in America who appreciates the value of deliberation.

Very possibly Jacksonville envies St Augustine its old Spanish fort and the sixteenth century cathedral; but, *per contra*, St Augustine has no St John's River. The fort and the cathedral are well enough for a one-day trip, but for a good week's excursion "up the river" is the motto. There are steamboats going up every day in the morning and afternoon. Those which start in the morning undertake to do the whole run from Jacksonville to Sanford by daylight; while the afternoon boats reach Palatka in the evening, do the narrow part of the river in the night-time, and as the sun rises next day they steam across Lake Munroe into Sanford. Here a train is waiting on the South Florida Railroad, to carry passengers right through the heart of the orange-grove country, or "orange-belt," as it is locally called, and down to the Gulf of Mexico at Tampa Bay. On heading out from the pier at Jacksonville, the steamboat presents to you a spacious bay, rounded off on all sides by "bluffs," — that is, raised banks from eight to twelve feet above the water-level. If they are only three or four feet above the dead level of the shore-line, they are still "bluffs." When they get to ten feet, they are spoken of respectfully, as in Scotland we might speak of Arthur's Seat or Berwick Law. Right opposite Jacksonville there is a series of well-marked bluffs, jutting out into the river like small capes, and forming between them picturesque coves.

They begin at the south side of the ferry for the St Augustine Railroad, where there is the nucleus of a new town, which proposes to style itself South Jacksonville. From this point upward the river-frontage is cut up into strips or plots, varying in width from 90 feet to a quarter or even half a mile. Many of them have during the past few years been laid out in orange-groves and truck-gardens, both of which seem to prosper. They are the nearest real groves to Jacksonville, and are in consequence a good deal visited by tourists. If they were more accessible, they would be much more frequented, for a finer sight than an orange-grove in full bearing does not exist even in the tropics. But the only road to them is across the ferry, along the railroad for a couple of miles, and then through the pine-woods at the back. Florida roads being, for the most part, simply tracks formed by traffic and the weather, they have to be followed by scent rather than by sight. The man who presumes to shorten them by taking a short cut is rather more likely to come back to his starting-point than to get to his destination.

But labyrinthine as they are, the South Jacksonville groves are a favourite resort. They generally start from the river-front, and run back into the pines. Their ages can be pretty well guessed by the distance that they extend back from the river. The oldest of them, we believe, is under fifteen years, and the youngest may not have seen quite as many months. One of the best and largest is owned by Mr Scruggs, a native Floridian, or, as the Floridians themselves have it, a "Cracker." The oldest part of it was laid out thirteen years ago, and the trees are now coming into full maturity. Strangers are

told that natural trees will bear in seven or eight years, and budded ones in five or six; but that is a different thing to getting from them fine-flavoured marketable fruit. After the seventh or eighth year they improve every season, and with careful cultivation they should have attained a full measure of juiciness and delicacy by their twelfth year. There seems to be no historical limit to their fruitfulness. Trees of mythical age exist in various parts of the State, which have had five thousand oranges in one crop. It is a fine bearer, however, that keeps up a good average of five hundred a-year. Mr Scruggs has a large number at that stage, and many others coming on. Altogether, he has over two thousand trees, and last season he shipped a quarter of a million oranges. This is not a mammoth grove, compared with some of the younger ones in "The Belt," which cover hundreds of acres, but it is a model of planning and cultivation. The trees are set in geometrical lines, and every space between them is a long avenue, mantled in spring with white blossoms, and in autumn glowing with the golden apples of this new Hesperides. Turn east, west, south, or north, and there is the same bewitching vista of white or gold, on a background of green foliage. Every tree is in itself a picture. Its stem is as straight and clean as a rod, and the branches spread out from it like arms, tapering regularly to the top. Its mere outline would make it a poetic tree, if it had neither fruit, scent, nor colour. But it is a combination of all that can ravish the senses. It captivates the eye, the nose, and the palate. In March the air is heavy with the rich odour of the orange-blossom, and even in the woods wild orange-trees scent the atmosphere for

miles around. Thousands of sprigs of blossom are sent north through the post, in little tin boxes specially made for them.

In South Jacksonville there are other groves which have interesting little histories attached to them. Some of them are owned by Scotchmen, and two have lately passed into the hands of Edinburgh men, who hope ere long to be able to ship direct to their friends; but that is a ticklish experiment, surrounded as yet with a good many risks and unsolved difficulties. Eighteen months ago Mr William Ord, formerly in the firm of Dymock & Guthrie, pitched his tent in this semi-tropical Eden. He bought one of the young groves on this bluff, and has established himself in it with his family. He is planting new trees, laying out the back land in "truck" or early vegetables, and waiting patiently for the golden harvest, which will begin to ripen a year or two hence. Mr Ord has given the climate a fair trial, and has seen it both at its best and its worst. Nothing, in his opinion, could be more delightful than the winter on St John's River, especially to a man who owns a nice bit of frontage likely to rise in value year by year. The summer is not so hard to bear as he anticipated, the heat being generally tempered by a cool breeze from the river. In the autumn he has a touch or two of "the chills," but he attributes them to overwork in the heat rather than to malaria. This is his second summer, and after getting acclimatised he will be better able to judge of its real effects.

Another grove on the bluff may have an indirect interest for Scotchmen. It belongs to Mrs Mitchell, wife of the well-known railway king of Milwaukee, Alexander Mitchell. He is a native of Aber-

deen, and one of the most successful Scotchmen in the States. Like Mr Carnegie of Pittsburg, he "rolls in dollars," and, what is more, he can keep the dollars spinning for other people who do not perhaps always come so well out of the game as he does himself. For many years he has been president of the leading bank in the State of Wisconsin. He is autocrat of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St Paul Railroad—a system embracing nearly 5000 miles of line, under one management and ownership. Mr Mitchell is not likely to have much leisure for orange-growing, but he posts down to Jacksonville for a few days now and then every winter. His wife has gone into the orange business with almost as much zeal as he devotes to banks and railroads; and "Alexandria," as her grove is styled, is one of the show spots on the St John's River. She has every kind of tropical plant and flower imported for her gardens, and is rapidly transforming a patch of hummock-land into a Trianon. Fifteen miles farther up the river, on the same side, is another grove under female management, more famed even than Alexandria. It is Mrs Beecher Stowe's at Mandarin. The first place that the Northern tourist asks for when he finds himself on board a river-boat is Mandarin. It is known all over the States as Mrs Stowe's winter home; and boats which call at Mandarin are always more crowded than those which pass it. For thirteen or fourteen years its owner has been beautifying and extending it, till now it has put on an air of antiquity, and seems to be indigenous. Mrs Stowe herself is no longer sure that she is not a born "Cracker." The Abolitionist epoch of her life, with 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and 'Dred,' and her other libels on the

South, has begun to vanish from her memory. She is now more Southern than Yankee; and local report says that some of her Yankee devotees get a freezing reception from her at Mandarin. We have seen her grove only from the river in passing. The house, which is almost hidden among trees, stands on a beautifully wooded slope. It has the shelter of an angle between two bluffs, and at the same time a fine exposure to the sun. Orange-trees, magnolias, palms, and pecan-trees flourish luxuriously on her domain; and the whirligig of time has in her case brought round a strange revenge.

On the other side of the river from Mandarin is an infant town styling itself Orange Park, where a large tract of land has been set out in groves, and land-agents have their hooks baited with them in all forms and sizes to catch the passing pilgrim. It is a disputed question, however, among experts, if oranges are safe from frost so far north as this, and on the exposed side of the river. Near Jacksonville, which is farther north, there would of course be equal or greater risk, if the river did not act as a protection from the cold north winds. That is a point to be settled by experience; but all the authorities are against groves on the west side of the river in any latitude higher than Palatka. This disability, whether real or fancied, may be a smaller misfortune than it seems, as the river-bluffs north of Palatka are without doubt admirably suited for truck-farming, which may, when the country fills up, turn out to be more profitable than orange-growing. At Mandarin, Magnolia, and all the boat-stations within a half-day's journey of Jacksonville, lots are being taken up and got ready for "truck," in the

hope that by-and-by transportation will be cheaper and more frequent, thereby giving the growers the full benefit of a good market. Whatever may come out of the orange industry, early vegetables are to be a mine of wealth for this part of Florida. It is substantially on a par with Havana and Bermuda as regards soil and climate, and it has a long start of them in being nearer New York and the North. It is not only geographically nearer, but in a railway sense very much so, as fast fruit and vegetable expresses can be made up at Jacksonville and run straight north. The various railroads profess to do this now, though, as a rule, they only attach fruit and vegetable cars in the season to their fast trains. When the service is efficiently organised, it will be a matter of everyday occurrence to put Florida strawberries and green peas on New York dinner-tables at Christmas. The raising of them on the St John's River is easy. The only difficulties are,—first, quick transportation to Jacksonville; next, quick handling of them there; and lastly, their rapid conveyance in properly refrigerated cars to the North.

From Mandarin and Orange Park up to Palatka, about seventy-five miles from Jacksonville, the St John's maintains its character pretty uniformly. One deep cove succeeds another, cutting far into the adjoining shore, and extending the breadth of the stream sometimes to six or seven miles. These coves are separated from each other by headlands, sometimes low and swampy, at other times standing out from the water and well clothed with timber. Most of the bluffs commanding fine views have been picked out by capitalists and speculators to "hold for a rise," as the natives have it. Now and

again the boats stop at piers, which seem to be in advance of their age. A few houses or farms may be visible behind them that they can draw traffic from, but these are only the advance-guard of a considerable colony that may be stowed away at the back of the pine-woods. Appearances are very deceptive in Florida. A wooden shed, which an English gentleman might not think any too big for his garden tools, is often the depot of a railroad doing a good paying traffic. In a country where the State seldom troubles itself about making roads, and would be puzzled how to do it if it tried, traffic of every kind is forced on to the railways. Even the hogs and the cattle have to ride to the market, and pedestrianism is a last resort both with man and beast.

Palatka marks the end of the Lower St John's. Here the river and the country undergo an important change. The former narrows its channel to about half a mile in width, and twenty miles further south it is lost for the time being in a series of lakes. The finest of these, Lake George, is a splendid sheet of water, about twelve miles long and nine miles

across. Its area is almost, if not quite, 100 square miles. South of it, the St John's is a mere thread compared with the grand volume of water below Palatka. It is more like a canal, overgrown by tropical vegetation, than a river; but there is plenty of water in it still to carry a large steamer up to Lake Monroe, at the south-west corner of which is our terminal port, Sanford. The St John's is not played out, however, even yet. As a narrow, winding, and twisting stream, doubling back on itself, and running about twice the distance that it need do, it pursues its way south, and loses itself at last near the Atlantic coast. In these last hundred miles or more from Palatka it has been running through the famous "Orange Belt"—a section of Florida physically and socially distinct from the one we have been describing. It is the second of three divisions into which the peninsula is gradually shaping itself,—one, the Truck Belt; the next, the Orange Belt; and the last, the Tropical Belt, where, at no distant date, pine-apples, cocoa-nuts, guavas, and bananas will be as plentiful as oranges are further north.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART VI.

CHAPTER XXI.—A COUSINLY CONVERSATION.

LESLIE found a pretext for his sudden departure, but somehow nobody seemed to give much credit to it. There was a sense of mystery in the air, and the serenity of the social atmosphere was troubled. Moray strove to do his best to make himself agreeable, but it was not in human nature to support the strain with the equanimity he had assumed in the excitement of its first coming. His bursts of gaiety were forced and unnatural; they were followed by relapses into silent abstraction. His friends behaved according to their several idiosyncrasies. Winstanley, with his accustomed sagacity, scented trouble in the air, and thought that, for his own comfort as well as out of consideration for his host, it might be advisable to shorten his visit. The excuse was all ready. Julia ought to be going south—her mother wanted her; and as he knew of no suitable escort, he had best take her in charge himself. If he felt inclined, he could always alter his plans *en route*, and consign her to her destination from Edinburgh or Glasgow. Calverley Baker felt less clear as to his arrangements. He was attracted, if not entangled, both by Miss Moray and Miss Winstanley; he liked his present quarters, and was loath to leave them, though he too had a shrewd idea that his room might be more desirable than his company. As for that rattling Celt, the M'Claverty, he was innocently unconscious of any cause for troubling himself. He ate, drank, shot, and amused himself, and trod on his host's corns at every turn. With Jack

Venables, as we need hardly say, it was very different. He watched, he meditated, and felt sorely aggrieved that he had not been thought worthy of the confidence which had been unquestionably extended to Leslie. For though he said very little when Winstanley spoke to him on the subject, that there was a secret of some sort he never doubted. Yet he was too loyal to the friendly connection, and to what he was pleased to think his love, to aid a stranger in discovering what his uncle desired to conceal.

For all that Mr Moray cared comparatively little, as his daughter caused him infinitely greater anxiety. Since they had been so much together, she had been in the habit of reading his face; and he very soon discovered, to his sorrow, that there was no possibility of deceiving her. He was too honest or too weak to act his part successfully, and with her his vaunted stoicism was a transparent sham. After trying repeatedly to win him over to tell her all she was eager to know,—after affectionately making opportunities which he would resolutely ignore, although it was evident to her that he was longing to avail himself of them,—she finally lost patience in her desperation, and put the question to him direct.

"There is something very serious troubling you, papa; and as it must affect me as well, I have a right to know it. Oh, it is no use denying it, even if you dared! and though you may keep a secret from me, which I should scarcely have believed, you could never say

what is untrue. And had it concerned yourself alone, though that is impossible, you would never have cared about it half so much. You have often said that we understood each other thoroughly, yet it seems that you can never have understood me at all, otherwise I should call you unkind, and even cruel. The only thing a girl is good for is comforting her father when he needs comfort. And you forget that when you are silent, I am imagining the worst, and very likely giving myself unnecessary anxiety."

Her father involuntarily groaned. Seeing that nothing short of ruin was before them, his daughter's worst fancies could hardly play her false.

Grace answered the groan with a sorrowful look which was more eloquent than any appeal in words. With his pale face and his quivering lips, Moray seemed like a criminal under the pressure in the torture-chamber. So that, in a spasm of remorse at her playing the tormentor, she tried to speak more playfully, and only changed the form of torture.

"I should not have been so vexed had my cousin Ralph been your only confidant; but it is clear to me that Donald Ross is in the conspiracy of silence as well, and I cannot say I feel flattered by the preference. Oh, you must not blame poor Donald," she went on hurriedly, for her father had moved his lips with something that suggested an execration. "If he did tell me the story of the widow, he would not breathe a syllable in a case like this; but I am sure the old man was never more miserable in his life, and I only put two and two together."

Then Moray heaved a sigh that threw a weight off his chest, and made up his mind in a moment.

He expected the letter from Leslie that very forenoon, so that, after all, the disclosure would only be anticipated by an hour or two. If his worst fears were realised, no harm would be done; if, on the contrary, things proved better than he expected, the shock of the great calamity would be lightened. He had taken her in his strong arms, and clasped her with a tender pressure, so that she could feel the palpitations of his heart. He had just begun with, "You know well I never doubted you, dearest; that if I have hurt your feelings by my silence, it was all meant for the best,"—when a knock at the door interrupted him. Grace had come to seek him in his den, to which in these days he withdrew only too frequently.

"Who is it?" he asked impatiently, pushing his daughter away from his embrace.

"A boy with a pony has brought the post-bag on from the post-office, sir. One of the letters was marked for special and immediate delivery." And the man's tone of sympathetic interest irritated his master. It seemed to show that the trouble he had sought to conceal was common talk in the household. He was on the point of telling the servant to take the letter-bag away, since there could be no possible hurry about the contents. But looking at his daughter, who seemed to have been struck into a statue of suspense, he changed his mind, and sacrificed his *amour propre*. "Well, you may give it me then, since you say one of the letters is marked urgent; but remember another time, when you know me to be engaged, that any urgent letters will keep."

So the man went away, more convinced than ever that his master had grave reasons for anxiety; and the moment the door had

closed behind him, Grace in turn had thrown her arms round her father. She saw that his anxiety was great as her own, so she administered a kiss by way of cordial. Though he was grievously ashamed of his agitation, his fingers fumbled as he opened the lock of the bag, and drew out a handful of letters and papers. Letters for himself, for Winstanley, for Baker, &c.; and naturally the last he came to was that addressed in Leslie's hand.

"Confound those square envelopes that are gummed all round and all over!" His trembling fingers could hardly force their way in. But if he had hoped against hope, hope was extinguished at the first glance. "I am grieved, my dear uncle," Leslie began—and then he knew that all was over. He laid the letter down, and before reading further, he briefly broke their condition and their prospects to his daughter. Of course he need have had no anxiety as to the immediate effect on her. So far as that went, he ought to have known her better. Grace, who had been brought up from the cradle in luxury, was ignorant as a baby of the sordid side of life. It was impossible that she should shrink on the spur of the moment from the pecuniary sorrows that were quite unfamiliar. More especially when in a state of high nervous exaltation, all her thoughts and sympathies were concentrated upon her father. What occurred to her was, that here was a chance of rising to her ideal mission as a ministering angel. She had longed for some occasion of proving her great love, and now and at last she had the opportunity. Moreover, she believed so entirely in her father's courage and resources, that she was as slow as himself to admit

that misfortunes could shake him to his fall. Not that she by any means blinked the real state of the case; but she was ready to welcome any sacrifices that might be imposed. To her high spirit, overstrung by her filial devotion, that seemed but a new form of pleasurable excitement. Had she foreseen the separation it might involve, her feelings must have been very different.

"It is sad, to be sure, that you should lose the fruits of all your labours," she said; "but after all, we shall only part with the superfluities, which were always as much of a trouble as a pleasure. I never cared for that life in town; and as for you, had it not been for your labours in East London, I am very certain it would have been nothing but positive wretchedness to you."

"Perhaps so," answered Moray, with a sigh; "yet I begin to regret it, now that it has slipped from me. It is no light thing to lose the power and pleasure of doing good; and then—Glenconan. How I wish it had been entailed! and I have rejoiced so much in freeing it from its burdens, and in the prospect of leaving the old place to you and your husband."

"I don't know about the power of doing good, but as to the pleasure, it can only be more keen when we do good on a narrow income. Remember the blessing on the widow who bestowed her two mites was greater than on the rich who gave out of their superfluities. And as for Glenconan—my husband, should ever I have one, must manage to make himself happy without it. At all events, now, if I am married, it will be for myself, and not for my money. So that you see, papa, on second thoughts even this calamity is not without its compensations."

"I know a man who would make you happy, whether he married you with your money or without it," thought Moray. And thinking so, his thoughts very naturally reverted to the momentous communication lying on the table. It did not tell them much that was new: it merely confirmed his worst anticipations. "With regard to the prospects of the liquidation," Leslie wrote, "which is the all-important question, I regret to say that the gloomiest reports are generally circulated and believed. The largest shareholders are deeply indebted to the bank, by the fraudulent complicity of their friends on the direction, and I fear they are hopelessly insolvent. It is the story of the 'City of Glasgow' over again, and some of the directors have borrowed enormous sums which they can be in no position to repay. The rest of the shares, with not many exceptions, are held by persons of very moderate means, or by small tradesmen who have sunk their savings in them. In the circumstances, it would be both cowardly and foolish to shrink from looking our misfortune in the face, and I know the firmness of your resolution too well," &c., &c. Then he passed from business to what may be called sentiment, and reiterated the expressions of his heartfelt grief that his mother should have been the cause of beggaring his uncle. "I know not how you are to break this to poor Grace," he went on. "To a girl brought up as she has been——"

But there Grace interrupted the reading. "A girl brought up as she has been, indeed! Yet why should I complain of my cousin misunderstanding me, when my father could think I should be troubled for myself." Then changing her tone, she sighed out "Poor

Ralph!" Putting herself in his place, she remembered how bitterly, with his unselfishness, he must feel his position. For her father had told her of Ralph's proposition, and of the practical arguments which had induced him to reconsider it. Perhaps, looking at these from another point of view, she attached less importance to them than he had done. But she did him the justice to feel that he would suffer the more severely, if he were persuaded to remain even in the nominal enjoyment of his estate when she and her father had been ruined. She knew enough of the world to be aware that evil tongues would talk ill of him, and that well-meaning people would misconstrue his motives. She knew how that sensitive nature of his would smart under such misconstruction. And although she had characteristically undervalued the loss of their lands and their money, she already began to realise some other of the sorrows in store for them.

Moray was the first to break a silence that had lasted for some minutes. "Well, Grace, my darling, now we are assured of the worst, there is no time to be lost in providing for it. I don't mean as to matters of business," he added, with a sad smile; "they will keep for a time, since nothing we may do can mend them. And Ralph has full powers to act for me, and he will keep us informed of all that goes on. But it would be hypocrisy, and worse, to try to play the happy and wealthy hosts for an hour after we positively know that we are paupers. I hate a scene, but fortunately no one has gone out shooting to-day; and when the party assembles at lunch, I shall tell them all about it. Of course till that is over, you will keep your room. Nay, I ask it as a personal

favour, for I will not lay my commands on you. Alone, I can go through with it well enough: I should be ashamed to break down over a mere loss of money. But with you at my elbow, I could not answer for myself; and you would not willingly be the cause of my weakness—or the witness of it.”

Grace had nothing to answer to that argument; but again she felt the sharp prick of the thorns. She was like the passenger who is ordered below under battened-down hatches, and denied the excitement of open-air dangers on deck, when the ship may at any moment be sent to the bottom.

“Of course, papa, I shall do as you desire; and perhaps it may be the best. But there is still an hour to lunch, so I shall slip out at the side door, and wander up the wood-paths in the glen. The fresh air will do me good, and I may make the most of our beauties while we have them.”

Her eyes filled with tears, and so, to tell the truth, did her father's. Next to the daughter who was so dear to him, he grieved over his beautiful Glenconan. But it was no time to give way to emotion, and he pulled himself sharply together, as he had often done before.

“You say it is an hour to lunch, dear, and there is one thing I ought to do: I must try to get hold of Jack beforehand. He is a good boy, and my nephew, and he would think it unkind if he heard nothing of our trouble till I announced it to strangers.”

With that he folded his daughter in a fond embrace; and never, even on the occasions when he had left for the East, were the two so loath to tear themselves asunder. From the window he followed her with his eyes as she stole swiftly towards the glen, like the lapwing that strives to elude observation as

she seeks the cover of the rushes near her nest. But as Grace felt escape more assured, her pace began to slacken; and she moved with an air of melancholy listlessness that sat strangely on her light and active figure.

“Heaven send,” sighed her father, “that the clouds may lift and pass; but meanwhile, and in a single hour, the whole brightness of her bright life has been transformed, and I hardly dare think how she may come out of the darkness.”

Grace was slowly climbing the winding path which led to a favourite seat of hers hanging over a murmuring waterfall. How often she had sat there in pleasant day-dreams, listening to the cheery splash of the water, that seemed to chime in with her own bright anticipations! The very foam-bubbles in the stream below, that sparkled in the sunshine as they danced and broke, might have been the emblems of the light and careless life, so free from all sorrows and anxieties. The reflection of the rainbow colours on the little clouds of spray had typified the varieties of a radiance that only took different forms. Now the merry memories of that happy past only made the present and the future weigh more heavily on her. The gay girl of the night before was a grave and thoughtful woman: she felt as if she might have slept for years, and wakened with a weakened body, in a woful world of sad experiences. It was all very well keeping her spirits up when it was her duty and privilege to console her father. It was all very well to pretend in his presence that the news he had broken need change nothing to her. She resembled him very closely in many ways, but naturally she was more emotional, nor had she his disciplined self-

control. So that the reaction came with her more quickly than it had come to him, and already she was conscious of a sad depression of spirit—of an intense craving for the sympathy of somebody with whom she could talk things over more freely than she dare talk with her father. "Oh that Ralph were only here!" was the natural thought that occurred to her, as she remembered the instinctive delicacy with which he had played the part of the consolers, when the widow of the unfortunate keeper had been the object of their common charity. Then, forgetting Ralph and her own sorrows for a moment, she reproached herself bitterly for the lightness of heart in which she had gone about that errand of mercy. No doubt she had been what she might have called "very nice"; she had said very suitable things in a sympathetic tone; she had spent her money—or rather her father's money—liberally. But all the time, in practising her charity as a luxury, as a philanthropical distraction, how very little had she really felt! And possibly she might never have the opportunity again of bestowing anything more than empty words of comfort. But how different had it been with Ralph!—she was sure of that. He had really felt where she had tried to feel; so if he were only at her elbow now, what an inexpressible relief it would be. But as he was far away, and as she found herself in a double solitude, she would do the next most comfortable thing in the circumstances—reach the haven of that lonely seat of hers, and indulge in the luxury of a good cry. She would have plenty of time before bathing her eyes and going back, since she had promised her father not to appear at lunch.

Mr Jack Venables, who had made no such promise, chanced then to be descending the hillside in excellent spirits and appetite. What he was thinking of at that particular moment I cannot pretend to say—perhaps, as was very much his habit, of nothing in especial. But it is certain that since his latest stroke of good luck, in spite of some vague anxieties about his uncle, he had moved about in an extreme sense of exhilaration. He had developed a novel taste for music, and had taken to whistling an accompaniment to his footsteps of reels and strathspeys, which, though for the most part they were woefully out of tune, appeared notwithstanding to please him excessively. Now, as coming by a short cut down the hill, bounding lightly from heather tussock to heather tussock, he was blundering with shortened breath at the second bar of "Tullochgorum," when he reached a point which commanded a view of the bench on which his cousin was seated. Whereupon he stopped short, and stood at gaze, partly to make sure that she was Grace and not Julia, for he seldom saw his cousin alone of a morning. Sure enough it was Grace, but he was greatly struck by her attitude. For in place of sitting upright, she was stooped nearly double, and, unless his eyes deceived him, was weeping bitterly. Jack was very warm-hearted, and somewhat curious as well. His cousin was in trouble; it would be a melancholy pleasure to comfort her; and then, no doubt, she had the clue to the secret that had been exercising him. It would be well if we analysed our mixed motives more often, though instantaneous photographs of mental introspection might yield very ugly results. He resumed his descent somewhat more leisurely, for his

mind was more full of speculation than ever, and after what he had seen, he had no fear of his cousin making a move immediately. He had suspended the whistling, which might have given her warning of his approach, but, being an honourable young fellow, he had no intention of taking her by surprise. Having made a slight circuit so as to cut off her retreat to the house, he struck up his "Tullochgorum" again, and more shrilly than ever, making a considerable rustling among the pine-boughs moreover, as he climbed the hill-path in turn.

His attitude of amazement when he stumbled upon his cousin did credit to his histrionic powers; and the way in which he rattled on about his morning's walk, and the observations he had been making on Highland natural history, in the manner of the intelligent hero of "Eyes and No Eyes" in our old friend 'Evenings at Home,' said much for his delicacy of feeling. But Grace, whose suspicions were perhaps excited by her sorrows, and who knew that she had vainly dropped a veil over her swollen and streaming eyes, was impatient both of the pretence and the interruption. So long as all went well, Jack was the most agreeable of companions; but it was not towards him she would have turned in adversity. She showed her impatience and annoyance by a movement that was more significant than flattering. Jack was hurt and humiliated, but, strange to say, in no way offended. Or if he was annoyed, it was only with himself. It all came of his confounded finessing, although he had finessed with the best intentions: he had been artificial, if not false, where he ought to have been cousinly and natural. And warm-hearted as he was, when he saw his cousin over-

whelmed with grief, he felt nothing but an unselfish eagerness to help her. As he spoke out frankly and manfully, yet in tones of deep tenderness, visibly broken by real emotion, every trace of resentment vanished from her heart and her face, and she frankly threw up her veil. It was the sign that she meant to have no more secrets with him; for had she not her father's permission to tell him all?

And indeed, as she told the pitiful story, her heart warmed to him as it had never warmed before. The young man was quite overcome, and could conceal his sorrow as little as his astonishment. To him the loss of worldly substance appeared far more serious than it had seemed to her at first sight. He was not one to undervalue the evils of poverty or the loss of social position and consideration. He could put himself quickly in his uncle's place, and realise all the bitterness of seeing the fruits of a successful career swept away when it might be too late to recover them. And at once, by intuitive sympathy of temperament, he conceived Moray's mind and read his purpose. He foresaw, what had never yet occurred to Grace, that their ruin meant a new separation. Grace would see her father go into exile a second time, just when, having been pauperised or beggared, she most needed affectionate support. Though, to be sure, she need neither be beggared nor impoverished. And then he melted to her in a great sympathy, which was free for the time from any touch of selfishness. It was with a trembling voice and a strange diffidence of manner that he reminded her how she and her father could never want friends, and stanch friends. In the earnestness of his feelings, he spoke almost as Leslie might have spoken.

"Remember that, through a long and honourable life, your father has not a single action to reproach himself with. Remember that, when he was rich and happy, he never neglected one opportunity of doing good. Look at me, for example, whom he has loaded with kindnesses, and with whom he offered to share his fortune; and be sure that in this passing adversity he will reap the fruits of what he has sown. Why, there are men, and good men, whom he has bound to him by obligations, who will think it the best day of their lives when he consents to accept some return. Trust me, dearest Grace," he went on,—and his sanguine nature did then good service, for there was no mistaking that he believed what he said,—“trust me, that we shall pull through somehow or other, and that things will come out very differently from what you anticipate.”

It was Jack's candour as much as anything else that gave Grace, at all events, some momentary hope. He was too honest, being thoroughly in earnest, to try to befool her with commonplace remarks to the effect that matters might be less desperate than she fancied. It was possible, but he did not believe it; and he would not prepare disappointments for her. She was quick enough to perceive as much, and to be grateful, and it gave her an agreeable sense of confidence in his predictions and consolations. Then the way in which he had spoken of her father was very sweet to her; and she was grateful again that, in the circumstances, he paid no compliments to herself. She had always much liked him, as we know; but now she felt a great revulsion of kindness in his favour. Blinded by his superficial brilliancy, and deceived by his gaiety of manner, hitherto she had never done him jus-

tice; and she remembered reproachfully how but a few minutes before she had regarded his arrival as an intrusion and a nuisance. It was never in her nature not to repay kindness with kindness—not to make reparation as she could—when conscience reproached her. Besides, Jack had been unmannered by excess of sympathy—she could see the tears still sparkling in his eyes, poor fellow! It was surely no time for reserve, when she had so much to say that would be pleasant for him to hear. He had laid hold of her hands, and pressed them in his ardour, and she squeezed his in return.

“Oh, Jack, you make me so happy, and so miserable, and so much ashamed of myself. I always liked you and admired you, and knew you must get on and make your way. But I never knew how good and how noble you were. There is some good already coming out of all this evil, for the scales are falling away from my blinded eyes. But you must confess,” she added, as she smiled through her tears, “that you should bear some of the blame. Why will you always talk lightly of all things, and never give expression to the real nobleness of your heart? But now we have had our explanation, and I hope it may be a lesson to both of us.”

Jack liked such lessons very much. And it was characteristic of him that, in those transports of his, and in this mood of exaltation, he accepted all she said to him very much as his due. Self-examination subsequently would have told a very different tale. In the meantime he felt, with agreeable resignation to misrepresentations, that hitherto he had been a much misunderstood, not to say a maligned, character; and that his unquestionable worldliness had been

a mask, which should nevertheless have been transparent. But it was the fate of virtue to meet with injustice, while in this instance justice had been done, although tardily; and on the whole all was well that ended well. Then rising to the height of the situation, and without the slightest hypocrisy, he set himself, in the most delicate manner possible, to give his cousin assurance of substantial assistance. His only desire was to speak so that she might be induced to accept his offers and the sacrifices he was ready, nay eager, to make.

All this time the minutes had been flying swiftly by, and the rest of the house party at Glenconan must have been safely seated at the luncheon-table. But had any of them bent their steps towards Miss Moray's sylvan bower, he or she must have read the last chapter of a romance in a scene that was merely cousinly if not purely platonic. Jack, still holding both his cousin's hands in his, from leaning against one of the rustic posts had gradually settled down upon one knee. But he rose as Grace breathed her confession of penitence, and for the first time she made room for him on the seat behind her. To keep his hold of both her hands in the circumstances would have been awkward, if not impossible. So releasing one, by way of recompense he softly stole an arm round her waist. It was done in all cousinly honour, and whether she was conscious of it or not, she made no objections. It was no time to stand upon trifles, with her heart going out in gratitude to her kinsman. And Jack, to do him justice, was by no means consciously lover-like. He fancied he felt to her something like a father. He longed to attain to the priv-

ilege of a disinterested benefactor. He pled and he pressed his claims with all his native energy and eloquence.

"You cannot refuse, Grace, neither can your father. It would be cruel in you: it would be churlish in him. We have been brought up like brother and sister,"—there he rather drew the long-bow, since he had only seen her once or so before their meeting at Glenconan in the previous summer; but the emergency admitted of poetical licence, and neither, as I said, was standing on trifles. "We have been brought up like brother and sister," said Jack, with great fervour; "and as for your father, he has been a father to me. Do you know that he placed his purse at my disposal, and offered to launch me in the East at his own expense, when that legacy of mine made acceptance unnecessary? Do you know that when I went in for my first fortunate speculation—it was at Oban, on the way south, after my shipwreck—and when Mr Winstanley objected to the insufficiency of my means, I told him with entire confidence that I could count upon Glenconan's assistance? I should have asked anything of him, only Winstanley stepped in. So you see that really I am largely his debtor, and now I have the first claim among many others to ask him to let me lighten my load of gratitude."

It was well and delicately urged, as Grace felt; and she was not unwilling herself to welcome relief from that quarter. His gentle manner soothed her deliciously: she remembered how steadily successful he had been, and leant naturally towards the support that was offered them. So she did not refuse absolutely, as he had feared: as she would have refused almost with scorn and indignation

had he spoken more abruptly. She rather temporised, and murmured the objection that from him, or from a man of her father's age, offers of the kind came very differently.

"My father was an elderly man, and thought himself wealthy. As you said, he might have stood to you also in the place of a parent; and it was your duty to accept from him what we dare not accept from you."

"Nonsense, Grace! There speaks your pride, and a false pride, as you know very well." As he saw her listening, hesitating, and half yielding, he resolved to carry her resistance with a rush. "Nonsense! you know that age has nothing to do with it. I am old enough to be my own master, and to know my own mind—and yours. To put it upon higher grounds, have you any right to refuse me the luxury of doing a duty that is comparatively unselfish? I have never had such a chance before: I may never have such a chance again. I must have your help, of course—the whole tenor of my future life may be trembling upon a single word from you. Refuse—only you have not the heart to refuse—and if I become a callous and self-seeking money-grubber, I only hope you may never reproach yourself. If you knew my temptations that way, you would surely come to the rescue. Accept, and only promise you will do your best to prevail on your father—and do you really suppose I shall be the poorer or the worse? Even if I be a trifle the less rich for a time, I shall never have made a better speculation, and you cannot have the conscience to refuse me from false pride."

Again Jack and his cousin Ralph seemed to have changed rôles; and as he put himself in the place of

the cousin that she revered, she was more and more moved in his favour. He was quite right, as she admitted. What had chilled the liking that might have once changed to love, was the suspicion that at bottom he was selfish and worldly. If there had been anything of truth in that, he had generous impulses, which only needed to be fostered into vigorous life. His fate, as it seemed, might be in his hands, and terrible might be the responsibility if she refused to help him. It would be hard enough in any case to deal with her father, with his rugged pride, with his haughty independence,—but at any rate, was she not bound to try? If she failed, she would have done her best; she would have pleased her cousin by making common cause with him, and she would have delivered her conscience. While, if she succeeded—and she knew something of her influence—her father's fall would be broken to him, and he would be easy in his declining years. It was not in her nature to give her confidence by halves, or to accept such kindness as this without doing her utmost to show her sense of it. Metaphorically she threw herself into Jack's arms, and heart and soul she accepted his alliance. And to do that honest-hearted but impulsive young gentleman bare justice, never in his life had he felt more grateful or gratified. Not when he had heard of the legacy that gave him wings to fly; not when Winstanley, reaching out a hand, had lifted him on to a firm standing-point; not when the private secretaryship to my Lord Wrekin had offered him an admirable opening in politics; not when, only a day or two before, the telegram about the American mine had given him the partnership in a possible El Dorado. Again,

it would be ungracious to analyse the motives which he assuredly did not pause to examine himself. He may have felt something of the pride of unfamiliar power, in the prospect of saving such a man as Glenconan, whom he had regarded as the ideal of a successful adventurer. He may have had some *arrière-pensée* of the hold he was laying upon Grace, who seemed leaning to him more and more, in her love and her fast-growing gratitude. Certain it is, that he behaved with rare delicacy and circumspection. Grace had said, with delightful warmth and brevity, and with a look that meant much more than the words—

“Say no more, dear Jack; you have more than persuaded me, and I can only promise to do my best. Should my father accept these favours at your hand, you will have good reason to be proud, though it may seem ungracious to say so. You may be sure, at all events, that neither he nor I will ever forget what you have offered us to-day.”

And as the colour had come back to her cheeks with reviving excitement and hopes; as her tears had dried themselves in the breeze, and her eyes seemed the brighter and the fresher for them; as the listlessness of her attitude had given place to her usual lithe and graceful vigour, with the earnest passion of the emotion that had left its traces on her face,—Jack had never before known the richness of her beauty. It was destined to be a day of revelations. To his delight she intimated her acquiescence in his offers. He came back to something like his own familiar self. The sacredness of her sorrow had chilled him into reverence. With her promise to permit him to relieve it, and her reviving spirits, his passion began to awaken with

his perception of the beautiful, and he admired the woman with a passionate admiration. At that moment he would have stripped himself of all he had, willing to begin the world again, could he only have made sure of securing her as his wife; and yet but a few moments before he had been thinking neither of love nor marriage. But Jack was a gentleman, and his generous intentions still made his cousin very sacred to him, and not for an instant would he have abused his opportunities. It had occurred to him to ask her to be his wife on the spot: but he dismissed the thought before he had entertained it. He would as soon have made love to a woman whose will had been paralysed by mesmerism, like a Lorenza under the spells of a Joseph Balsamo. On the contrary, with one last lingering pressure, which he could not resist, he gently withdrew his arm from around her waist. He sealed their bargain with a cousinly kiss on the cheek, which he did not prolong indiscreetly, and then, to all appearance, becoming once more the self-possessed man of business, he began to discuss ways and means, and to prepare his cousin for what she had to say to her father. He had not tried to blink the magnitude of this misfortune in the beginning of their interview, and now it proved that honesty was the best policy. He put the case to her with a precision that might have appeared cruel in other circumstances.

“Of course, till you told me, I never suspected how deeply we were concerned in this miserable failure. All the same, I was interested in it as a public calamity, and have been reading everything about it very carefully. If we are to trust the best information, there is no denying that the smash may

swallow even a fortune such as your father's. It would be no kindness to prepare disappointments for you by persuading you of anything else. And, like the friendly swimmer who told his drowning comrade in the water that he would not lay a finger upon him till he was helpless, I must not come forward ostensibly till the final arrangements have been made. Meanwhile—and I was never so thankful for it before—I have more money than I know what to do with. I am always so actively employed, that I have never the time to spend or to

squander; and I have had marvellous luck, as you know, with every one of my investments."

"You may say now 'a marvellous blessing,' I think," suggested Grace, softly.

"A marvellous blessing, then, if you choose to sanctify my money by drawing on it; and from henceforth, dear Grace, remember I have your promise to persuade your father to treat me as his son." He did not venture to add, "and as your brother," though he had to check the sweet words that were trembling on his lips.

CHAPTER XXII.—AN EXCITING LUNCHEON.

Glenconan's guests had enjoyed many a lively meal under his hospitable roof, or in his picturesque glens. But never had they had such an exciting repast as at the luncheon on that memorable "Black Monday." Though the great news was their *pièce de résistance*, it really came in as dessert. Once again he had summoned his pride to his aid, and done the honours with something like his former joviality. Only a close observer might have remarked that his appetite failed him, and that he trifled with the knife and fork that were wont to do signal execution. He was eager to precipitate the inevitable disclosure; he was longing to know how those friends of his would take it. Their reception of the announcement would be a pretty fair test of what he might expect from the world. But he had made up his mind to wait till they had trifled with the cheese and the biscuits; and with eyes turning perpetually towards the clock, he suffered and waited accordingly. Then, as it chanced, Mr Winstanley gave him an opening.

"Everything must stagnate, of course, towards the end of August; but really, on my word and honour, those papers become intolerably dull. Shooting is all very well for you young men, but I have become somewhat dependent on public sensations. And all the subjects are either threadbare or trivial, or at all events they do not recommend themselves to my selfishness. I know all about the national defences, and the wisdom of imperial federation, and the due protection of our coaling-stations. I confess that my sympathies are purely platonic for the shop-girls who are forbidden to use the chairs provided by their employers for customers. And I am personally indifferent as to openings in life for 'our boys,' seeing that happily I have no boys to provide for. I must say, Moray, that in your favourite *rôle* of Monte Christo, you are bound to supply us with a new sensation."

"And I have got it for you, Winstanley," said Moray, so gravely that that sensitive gentleman felt he had put his foot in it. Re-

membering the mystery that had been floating in the air, he knew at once that he had pulled the string of a shower-bath, and might look out for a chilling douche. He had rather the string had been pulled by any hand but his own; but it was too late to laugh it off, and he simply sat still and listened.

Then Moray told his story, frankly and with manly brevity. He made no moan over his misfortune; he did not condescend to apologise for his carelessness: what was present to his mind was the duty incumbent upon him of showing, that he expected and would accept of nothing from his auditors.

"I should not have troubled you," he said, "with those personal annoyances of mine, but they may become public property within the next day or two; and I felt that as you are living under my roof, you have the guests' claim on my confidence. I think I should have been wanting in the duties of hospitality had I left you to learn anything of this from others, or possibly from the public prints."

In his jealous fear of their misconstruing his motives, he was careful to say nothing of the claims of friendship; and yet, while his manner was stern and almost repelling, he was longing for some frank outburst of sympathy.

Had he thrown a bomb-shell by way of a dish for dessert into the middle of the little party, he could scarcely have surprised them more, or, I may add, scattered them from Glenconan more effectually. Not that they were worse than the rest of the world, or that the world is so bad as it is popularly supposed to be. But our ordinary acquaintances, on the shortest possible notice, cannot be expected to undertake

the bearing of their neighbours' burdens, more especially when the burdens mean unlimited liability. The first impulse is to put themselves out of reach of danger; the second, perhaps, to see what can be done.

Calverley Baker was getting on towards becoming a millionaire by inheriting a lucrative business and looking sharply after number one. It was not to be expected that in the first shock of a deception, though it might have been an involuntary deception, he was to fly in the face of all his principles, and commit himself. Moreover, he had been considerably smitten by Miss Moray, and could not precisely remember how far he might have pushed his advances. The douche that Winstanley had thrown down on the luncheon-party had effectually chilled any fervour in his affection; and while he murmured something sympathetic, he had made up his mind that he must be summoned to the south by some telegram on the morrow. Once at Cardiff, as he told his conscience, regaining his freedom of will, he could do anything that was friendly and judicious. As for the M'Claverty, the chieftain was an honest fellow enough, and sorrowed for the calamity more than might have been expected. He had taken kindly to Glenconan, who was a capital companion on the moors; and in his inborn pride of birth and race, he would have regretted the extirpation of an ancient Highland family. He was sorry for Glenconan, and very sorry for himself, for he too had had vague aspirations of marrying the heiress. And he spoke out the more heartily and unreservedly that nobody could reasonably expect anything of him. He enjoyed but a liferent of entailed acres; and if he were not actually poor as Job, it would have

been the height of absurdity had he held out a lean purse to the tottering Cræsus.

Winstanley's feelings were much more complicated. I must have been very unsuccessful in my sketch of that gentleman if I have not shown him as at once good-natured and inveterately selfish. Far more than Mr Baker would he have been willing to help Moray. But even more than the wealthy Welsh ironmaster, thanks to his familiarity with boards of direction, was he paralysed by the horrors of unlimited calls. Prompt offers of help seemed out of the question, yet his situation had become extremely awkward. It is true that he did not care for dissipation, or even gaieties; but he by no means assented to the dictum of the Preacher, that it is better to be in the house of mourning than in the house of mirth. What had suggested itself to him before occurred to him again, that there is such a thing as overstaying your welcome. And so by a wide circuit he travelled to the same conclusion as Baker, that he would do the best for himself as for his unfortunate friend by withdrawing his foot from his friend's house as soon as possible. But Winstanley was nothing if not considerate, and the ugly coincidence of a telegram next day was an idea that could not possibly have occurred to him. He determined to cover his deliberate retreat with a kindness that should leave nothing to desire, and which, indeed, he felt rather than feigned. And like Baker, only with more sincerity of purpose, he resolved that he would reach Moray a helping hand. As the oldest man in the company, as the crony and almost the confidant of their host, it clearly devolved upon him to reply. And to do him justice, he weighed and chose his words

as much out of consideration for Moray's feelings as for his own.

"God knows, Glenconan, how grieved I am. Had such a misfortune fallen on my brother, as it might well have come upon any man, I could hardly have been more sorry. It would be paying you a poor compliment to try to make light of it, and I know your character far too well to underate its strength. At the same time, let me remind you, as an old man of the world, that our tendency under such shocks necessarily is to go to extremes. Bad as things may be, you may take it for granted that they are not nearly so black as they appear to be now. You see all the circumstances from a desponding point of view: you forecast none of the many chances that must mitigate them. I may venture to add, perhaps, that you forget the friends who can never forget their many obligations to you."

It must be confessed that the words of this speech of sympathy, though somewhat cold, were not ill-chosen. In the last sentence, which had been added by way of rider, the speaker had gone further than he originally intended. But in watching Moray's impassive face, he had warmed up, so as to try to strike one responsive spark from it; and after all, he had committed himself to nothing he was not willing to perform. He would gladly show himself a friend in due season, and even submit to some moderate sacrifices in the sacred cause of friendship.

Moray's answer was equally cool and extremely civil. When trouble softens before it hardens us, we are apt to hope against hope for fervent and active sympathy. But after all, Winstanley had said as much as might have been expected: with his ordinary penetration pre-

ternaturally sharpened, he had followed the conflicting workings of the other man's mind, and if he gave him little gratitude, he bore him no malice. He bowed and smiled a little bitterly; and then, quietly rising to open the door, he threw it back for his guests to pass out. Miss Winstanley, as the lady, ought, of course, to have gone first. But though, unlike her friend Grace, she was by no means much devoted to dogs, she had stooped to pat the black retriever that lay stretched on the hearth-rug, and was playing with the fringes of her silken ears; while the gentlemen, who saw that their host was impatient, did not stand on the order of their going, but evacuated the dining-room promptly.

Glendonan *was* impatient: he thought Miss Julia's flirtation with Finette very ill-timed. He had never liked the young lady much; he had deemed her both artificial and worldly, and had it not been for his confidence in Grace, would have wished his daughter a better companion. Consequently, being supremely indifferent to Miss Winstanley's opinion or feelings, he had hardly deigned her a look while telling his story. If he had looked, he would have seen that the girl was profoundly impressed. Worldly as she really was, she was all the less inclined to make light of the catastrophe. Appreciating profoundly, like Jack Venables, all Moray was losing, she could admire the manliness with which he had borne himself; and putting herself in his daughter's position, she felt sincerely for Grace. Perhaps she may have welcomed a rare chance of indulging in the pleasure of genuine emotion; and she was desirous, besides, of making atonement for some shortcomings in her father's speech. At all events, when she raised her head

there were real tears in her eyes, and Moray was both touched and taken aback. For once the strong and ready man had not a single word to say; and the girl who was generally so glib seemed to be equally embarrassed. But it is the woman in such circumstances who first finds her tongue; and once she had broken the ice, Miss Winstanley felt no further difficulty. She spoke with a feeling to which Moray had believed her a stranger. Though her voice trembled she was voluble enough; and by frankly owning to her faults, she took him on his weak side. After somehow expressing her sorrow and her surprise, she went on—

"But can you guess what selfishly troubles me the most in all this? It is, that Grace should never have thought me worthy of her confidence—unless, indeed, you had forbidden her to speak. It would have been so natural to seek comfort from the only woman under your roof, and one who had been living for weeks in her companionship. Don't think that I blame her, sir," she added quickly, seeing that he was about to interrupt and to defend his daughter. "It is myself I reproach, and I reproach myself bitterly. She thought I had no heart and no feelings, and, very likely, she was so far right; yet I surely have a heart somewhere, though I have often doubted."

"You need doubt it as little as I do," said Moray, kindly, laying his hand on her shoulder; "and I ought to be a judge in those matters," he added, with a smile. "The truth is, I knew as little of my misfortunes as you."

"Thank you, sir," said Julia, and she seized both his hands in hers. "You don't know how happy you make me; and if you would only think of me for one

moment as Grace, you might give me courage to speak freely."

"Speak freely, then, by all means, my dear. I am sure anything you say can only please me."

"Well, sir, all I wish to say is this, that you must not shake us off—me and my father. Had he been alone with you—had those other men not been in the room—I know he would have spoken very differently. He is rich; he knows the world well. I am sure I am blundering, but you have promised not to be offended. What I mean is, that I am certain he intends you to count upon him, as I hope Grace will forget the past, and learn to lean upon me as a sister. You will try to persuade her, won't you, sir?"

Moray's constancy had been proof to the cold reception of his news, but it was shaken by this genuine and unexpected outburst. He was very grateful to Miss Winstanley for convincing him that cynicism was to be made difficult, or impossible.

"Never mind now about your father, or what he or anybody else may do for us—we shall have time enough to think about all that. But when either you or I tell Grace what has passed between us, I am sure she will agree with me that our losses may prove to be gains. You have made me cheerful, if not happy, my dear, if that is any comfort to you; and now, if you mean to please me, you must dry your eyes and let me go."

"And you will not misunderstand my father," she added, pleadingly, laying a finger on his arm. "If I might tell you all, I can read him so clearly.

"And so can I, believe me," rejoined Moray, with a smile. Then stretching his conscience

slightly, he went on—"I should have spoken precisely as he spoke in similar circumstances. Neither of us are quite so young as you, and we have long lost the freshness of your feelings—worse luck. But all the same, I envy and understand them." And then he did what that morning he would never have dreamed of doing, and pressed a fatherly kiss on her forehead.

I may almost say that Julia Winstanley felt a transformed girl, as he left her standing on the rug over the impassable Finette, who, like a true cynical philosopher, had assisted at the interview, without even one approving wag of the tail. That rush of warm natural feeling might have changed the currents of her life. She had indulged in the luxury of affectionate sympathy, and was rewarded by knowing that it was a luxury indeed. And it was remarkable that the indulgence of unselfishness led on to ideas of self-sacrifice, though it may be true that they did not cost her very much. She had never been really in love with Jack Venables; she had never acknowledged to herself that she had more than a liking for him. But considering that he had been the adopted son of the house—that circumstances had brought him into perpetual contact with her,—it was naturally somewhat irritating to her vanity that he had persisted in being constant to Grace. She had seen that any of his flirtations with herself had been platonic, and she had rather resented it. She had never known exactly what to make of him. Being young and ardent, he was naturally ambitious; and though he might regard money as merely making stepping-stones for his advance, he seemed to be as keenly set upon money-getting as her father. That he should have stuck

to his attachment to his cousin, who was likewise the heiress to her father's wealth, was only consistent. But how might he behave now that Grace was suddenly beggared? She had a sinister suspicion that he might turn towards herself, in which case she would have scorned and summarily rejected him. She would never have consented to be married for her money, by a man who had been proof to her charms while he could do better. And in any case, not having too high an opinion of the masculine nature, she thought that

Jack might make a satisfactory enough husband, if once fairly wedded to a wife who had many fascinations. Now he was relatively rich, and had brilliant prospects before him. So Miss Winstanley loyally resolved that it should not be her fault if he were not retained in his allegiance to his cousin. Then the proud Mr Moray might accept from a son-in-law and a daughter the assistance he would reject from anybody else. Having come to that comfortable conclusion, she remembered it was time that she left the dining-room.

CHAPTER XXIII.—JACK DRIFTS TOWARDS MATRIMONY.

It was an odd instance of the irony of circumstances that Jack Venables and Miss Julia Winstanley, having reached an identical conclusion by very different roads, should fall literally into each other's arms as their thoughts had converged. Jack, coming back to the house, had made a rush for the dining-room to ring for the cold meat and the bread and cheese, since before facing his uncle he felt that he needed fortifying. Opening the door, he found himself face to face with the young lady, who already had her hand on the handle.

"Miss Winstanley!" he ejaculated, with some astonishment; and she set his surprise down to a guilty conscience.

"Yes, Mr Venables," she answered, gravely, "we have just been hearing very sad news from your uncle."

Now Jack, contrary to her surmises, was rather pleased to happen upon her than otherwise. He was full of all he meant to say to Mr Moray: in his rapid walk to the house he had been thinking of little but his cousin; and in the

consciousness that Miss Winstanley might possibly have misunderstood him lately, he was anxious to burn his boats and put everything on the most straightforward footing. He would feel his way as to offering himself for Grace, but in any case he must be free of any *arrière-pensée*. Nevertheless, and until the way was felt, he had no idea of taking anybody unnecessarily into his confidence. So he said nothing, and waited for her to speak on. Then, still under the influence of her recent emotion, she spoke on very strongly. Jack, at that moment all glowing with health as he was after his exercise, seemed to shrink up and shrivel in her eyes. She imagined him embarrassed as to transferring his "love," and she meditated upon whitened sepulchres and the miserable weaknesses of masculine humanity like a feminine Thomas à Kempis. So far as she was concerned, there should be no further misunderstanding; yet she felt constrained to temporise for Grace's sake.

"We have been hearing very sad news, and I need not say how

grieved we have been for Grace and your uncle. How I wish I were in your place!"

"In my place, Miss Winstanley! what can you mean?"

"My meaning is plain enough. If I were in your place, I should have the claim of relationship. If I were in your place, I should go to Mr Moray and force upon him, in the rights of relationship, what he would spurn were it offered as a kindness. And if I were in your place," she went on, looking straight into his eyes, "I think I should take advantage of your double relationship with your cousin, and plead for her accepting the protection which she doubly needs in her isolation."

Jack stared in amazement. Miss Winstanley with her passionate eloquence was a new revelation to him, and perhaps not altogether a pleasant one. To have one exceedingly pretty girl, to whom he had necessarily and as mere matter of civility paid certain slight attentions, urging him frankly and with no semblance of disguise to go and offer marriage to another beauty, was altogether a new and startling experience. However, as his aspirations coincided with her orders, there was nothing more to be said. No doubt, honesty was the best policy; and as she showed herself so absolutely indifferent, she should have no reason to complain of any want of frankness.

"I should never have dreamed of troubling you in this matter, Miss Winstanley; though I am sure we shall always be the best of friends. I had no notion you took so deep an interest in my future. But as you *have* condescended to interest yourself, and as my uncle has confided his own affairs to you, all I have to say is, that it rests with Grace and with her father how far they may per-

mit me to sink or swim with them. My dearest ambition is to make her my wife; though I need hardly say, that I tell you that in strict confidence."

The frank expression of feeling took Miss Winstanley likewise by surprise: we dare not say whether the surprise was entirely agreeable. Assuredly she liked Jack none the worse for the trace of pique which gave point to his candour. At any rate, with perfect composure, and in the good-fellowship that had always existed between them, she took his hand as she had taken Mr Moray's.

"I cannot tell you what pleasure you have given me, for you may help them if anybody can. And though it may seem presumption to say so, perhaps I may be of some use in promoting your wishes. Grace is not much given to confidences; but surely a girl will talk in those circumstances, if she feels pretty certain of sympathy. And I think, after the conversation I have had with Glenconan, that she may feel more affectionately towards me than she has ever felt before."

Whereupon Miss Winstanley did leave the dining-room at last; and Mr Venables, violently ringing the bell, sat down to a cold sirloin with a capital appetite. The next tack in his course so far was all plain sailing: he felt committed to a step he had only contemplated; and when he placed himself unreservedly at his uncle's disposition, it should be with the intimation that his dearest desire was to obtain the hand of his cousin. It was decidedly his custom to be preoccupied by a single idea at a time; and Leslie's rivalry, with his own gratitude, were dismissed as entirely as if he had never gone hunting the wild goats at Loch Rosque, or as if the man

who had saved him lay buried at Tom-na-hourich.

Moray had been brought into more charity with his fellow-creatures by the passionate outburst of the worldly Miss Winstanley. After that, it seemed blasphemy to doubt of the love and care of an omnipotent Providence, which might manifest itself unexpectedly in the least likely quarters. But all the more, he looked forward to the meeting with Jack, when Jack should have learned the misfortune that had lighted upon him. He had loved the lad for his spirited impulses; he had marked his selfishness, or rather his self-absorption, but he had never doubted his sincerity; and now his young friend would be brought to the test. From Jack, as from everybody else, Moray was determined to accept nothing but goodwill; but still it would be a sad addition to his troubles should Jack prove as guardedly sympathetic as old Winstanley. He had withdrawn to the solitude of his den: he knew his nephew in common decency must come to him; and in all the distraction of his roving thoughts, he sat listening for the boy's foot in the passage. The well-known footfall came in due course, and then there followed the rap at the door. The strong man was so overstrained, so painfully excited, that he scarcely dared to look up when he called out, "Come in." But in another instant his anxiety was relieved. His hand was silently grasped with a fervent pressure; and Jack, drawing a chair towards him, sat down affectionately beside him. Come what might, he was delighted to know that the nephew he had loved the best was of metal as true as the other.

"So you have heard all about it, Jack? Eh?"

"I have heard it; and by what I may call a happy accident, I have heard it all from my cousin. I chanced to meet her as I was hurrying home to lunch; and will you think me very heartless if I say that the bad news have affected me less than I expected—hardly spoiled my appetite?"

"I don't know why they should, I am sure," rejoined Mr Moray. In other circumstances he might have been disappointed, but he still felt the warm pressure of his nephew's fingers, and he guessed already whither Jack was tending.

"And you will let me tell you why they should not—though, I think, you might meet me halfway, and spare me some little embarrassment."

"How do you think Grace takes it?" demanded Moray, somewhat irrelevantly.

"Just as I should have expected. She is a noble girl, and a very sensible girl besides. Of course, her chief trouble is for you; and I believe she has such faith in your generosity of sentiment, that she feels that matters might have been very much worse."

"On my generosity? You speak in parables, Master Jack. It seems to me that for ever and a day, perhaps the practice of generosity will be far beyond my reach."

"You don't think that, sir. You know that if you were next door to a pauper to-morrow, you would be liberal still with your coppers, because you cannot possibly be otherwise. But Grace, as I fancy, thinks with me, that the real proof of generosity with a man like you is in consenting to lay yourself under something like obligations. Not, of course, that there would be obligations really," added Jack, blushing and stammering.

"So you two have been con-

spiring together," said Moray, his face lightening up; "and as it would appear that I am to be the victim of your machinations, I confess I am curious to hear what your objects are."

"Oh, for that matter, I am only anxious to return good for evil; and I have no wish to keep any of my secrets from you. You know that no young fellow in this world has ever had more luck than I, since the day the letter came to me here with the announcement of my legacy. Without being able to take the slightest credit to myself, I have tumbled out of one good thing into another. I made friends with Winstanley on that reef in the Atlantic; I have put my money and his credit out to something more than usury, since it is invested in all manner of speculations that are steadily looking up; through him I have formed a number of useful connections; and I have been pitchforked into that place of private secretary, where I hold winning cards if I only play them decently, with lots of trumps, and possibly an honour or two. Then, by way of capping it all, came that telegram the other day, which told me we had really struck oil in that American mine. I have ready money in hand, to say nothing of splendid contingencies; and when the opening comes, I am ready to cut into the game of politics with a sufficiency of fortune to back me."

"I know you have done exceedingly well for yourself, and no doubt you have had a most unusual run of good fortune. But such runs of fortune do not come to fools, and you are over-modest, Master Jack, in ignoring your own merits."

"Very well, my dear uncle, have it your own way; all the more, that I wish you to think well

of my prospects. I have a superstition against counting chickens before they are hatched, but nevertheless you must allow that I am doing well in the poultry line."

"I never denied it. Quite the reverse."

"And now," said Jack, talking very quick, "do you remember whence all my prosperity dates! From the day you called me into this room here as a penniless young scapegrace, and put your purse and your whole interest at my disposal. Even then I knew you were a man who would perform more than you promised; and I felt that if you sent me out to the East my future was secured, should I only keep steady."

"You didn't go. And even if you had gone, I offered you nothing more than introductions."

"I said that you promised less than you would have performed. The long and the short of it is, without any beating about the bush, you treated me that day like a father, and spoke far more considerately than most fathers would have done. And if I did not go, I told you the reason; and when I ventured to show you all that was in my heart, and even suggested my being much more your son than you had intended, you did not resent my impudence by turning me ignominiously out of doors. Nay, you only repeated your generous offer; and if that does not give me a claim upon you now, I don't know what should. Of course, you know why I have been blowing my own trumpet. If I remind you how well I stand in a worldly point of view, it is to show you that there is enough and to spare for us all; so that we may share without scruple anything I have to offer. I am asking a great thing; but then, surely, I have strong claims on you."

Moray's pale face beamed with pleasure.

"At any rate, my dear boy, you have done me a world of good. If I have learned nothing else, I have learned this forenoon how easily the sting may be taken out of money troubles. There is that girl, Julia Winstanley, behaving like a trump: she has been heaping coals of fire upon my head; for, to my shame be it said, I never greatly took to her. As for you, you have warmed my heart; but, to be sure, for you it has always beat very kindly."

"Then we understand each other," exclaimed Jack, with delight; and, to do him justice, he had never been so grateful before, for the prosperity which put it in his power to be his uncle's benefactor. After all, with an average share of faults, there was certainly a deal of good in Mr Venables.

"Softly, my boy, softly," said Moray; "there can be no possible misunderstanding between us for the future—you may be sure of that. But as for accepting what you offer so generously, that is another thing. To begin with, I fear I am dipped so deep, that I should only be dragging you into the abyss along with me."

"I don't know how that may be," rejoined Jack, changing all at once into the cool man of business. "But, in any case, I have been talking things over with Grace, who seems to have the family talents for business. I never contemplated this new partnership of ours commencing till the wretched bank business has been sifted to the bottom, and you have a discharge in full from all your liabilities. Strange it seems," added Jack, musingly, "that such a misfortune should fall on a man like you; and that a fortune, honourably made and nobly spent, should

be swept away by an accident so cruelly iniquitous."

"It is a hard case; but as for being iniquitous—would it surprise you to hear that if I have not been actually expecting something of the kind, at any rate my conscience protests against my daring to say it is undeserved? Do you remember watching me as we sat in the carriage on your first visit to Glencoman? You saw something in the expression of my face that puzzled you—did you not?"

"Well, now that you speak of it," said Jack, rather taken aback. To tell the truth, he had forgotten all about it, nor, for the moment, had he the faintest idea what his uncle might be driving at.

"I think I should like to tell you what it was that troubled me then. You won't take it amiss if I say that the warning may be useful; for we are much of the same turn of mind, which is the reason, no doubt, why I have always been drawn to you."

Then Moray told the story of his mental anxieties, pretty much as he had told it once before to Leslie. Only now he had the opportunity of pointing it with the moral, that this misfortune might be meant as merited retribution. But Mr Venables, as may well be supposed, listened in a very different spirit from Leslie. As a warning, he did not take the narrative at all amiss, nor had he the slightest intention of laying it to heart. He thought he might look back upon life with an easy mind, if he had nothing worse to reproach himself with than Moray. Had not his uncle said that these regrets had been haunting him for long, he would have thought his mind must have been shaken by recent trouble. What struck him most forcibly was the evidence of weakness in a

man he had always regarded as so strong: it was strange that his hero should actually have been reproaching himself with those daring and successful combinations for which he had most admired him. And, on the spur of the moment, he spoke of such sensibilities with something that sounded very like contempt; though, on the other hand, he was so eloquent in his admiration, that Moray was far from being offended. He spoke as ninety-nine men in a hundred might have spoken, and Moray thought rather sadly that the comfort had come too late. "I may have been a fool to worry myself with fanciful regrets; but in that case it will be the harder to see Glenconan go from me." Then expressing the conclusion of his thoughts aloud, he said, "And if sin there were, it seems hard, in any case, that the sin should be visited on my innocent child."

"Oh, so far as that goes," broke in Jack, who welcomed the opening he had been watching for—"so far as that goes, I make bold to say that you may make your mind perfectly easy. There are two things that lie near to your heart. You wish Grace to be independent; you would be glad to save Glenconan for her. If a girl is too rich, you know as well as I that she may be married to misery for her money and not for herself. There are heartless scoundrels stalking about looking out for heiresses whose substance they mean to devour; and though it is difficult to imagine a ruffian who could behave badly to Grace, there is no fathoming the depths of human depravity. Now, you see, as we have settled things," he went on, confidentially, "Grace will be no heiress—not to speak of—but she will, nevertheless, be very comfortably off; and we can easily keep the estate in

the family, though it may come cheaper to raise a mortgage on it in the meantime."

"An odd idea you have of a girl's independence!" was the thought in Moray's mind; but he dared not speak it out. For Jack, who was so ready with his replies to all objections, had assuredly an answer cut and dry to that one. As he would not speak, Jack did.

"You won't help me, sir, so I must help myself. As I said a little while ago, it is no use beating about the bush, so here goes. Give me leave to speak to my cousin—to beg and entreat her to become my wife. Her answer, whether favourable or the reverse, can make no difference in our understanding."

"No understanding," interpolated Moray.

"Her answer will make no difference in my resolutions, then, and I trust everything to time and your sense of justice. I cannot dare to hope she will say 'yea.' But if it should chance so, then, as your son-in-law, I shall take the liberty of arranging the settlements without any reference to you."

Moray was more moved by Jack's generosity than by his offhand eloquence. Honestly, should it please Grace, the marriage seemed an admirable idea. If he had the good luck to win the girl for his wife, his nephew gained more than he gave. But at the same time he remembered his obligations to another staunch friend and faithful counsellor. Jack might win the prize if he could, but Leslie should have no wrong.

"Speak to your cousin, by all means. If she does say 'yea,' you shall have my cordial approval. And in saying so much, I am certain you will not suspect me of interested motives. If you and

Grace arrange to pull comfortably together, I shall be off to the East again, and paddle my own canoe. Nay, never mind protesting in the meantime," he said, in answer to Jack's gesture of deprecation. "You shall not find me hard to deal with. But as I have recalled certain circumstances to your recollection already, I must tax your memory again. You remember, when you made something like a similar proposal once before, I told you that you and Ralph Leslie should both have fair play."

Jack's animated face blanched all over. For these two or three exciting hours he had forgotten the existence of Ralph Leslie, and now the reminder was disagreeable as might be. It chilled all his fervour; it threatened to dissipate all his dreams. If Grace were really attached to Leslie, she would certainly say 'no' instead of 'yes.' Even if Grace felt doubtful, and Leslie were really in love with her—he suspected something of the earnestness of Leslie's nature—

could he, in common gratitude, in common honour, abuse his accidental advantages to make his benefactor miserable? Here was an ugly complication with a vengeance. Moray understood all that was passing in the young man's mind, and again his affections inclined to his favourite. It seemed fated that Jack should always behave in a way that won his liking as well as his esteem.

"My dear boy, the decision rests with Grace, and the common wish of all of us is that she should choose for her own happiness. Leslie is in love with her—that you must have known. So are you. I should willingly welcome either of you for a son-in-law. I love Ralph as much as I respect him: yet I frankly tell you that if I were a marriageable young woman, I think I should prefer you for a husband. You may go and inquire, if you like, whether Grace agrees with me, and I assure you I shall be anxious to hear how you speed."

CHAPTER XXIV.—JACK GETS HIS ANSWER.

Poor Jack was in a sad quandary. All his better feelings were in the ascendant, but unfortunately those better feelings fought against each other, and sophistry was enlisted on the more selfish side. Moray's penetration confirmed what he knew by his own inner consciousness—namely, that Leslie was in love with Grace. And if Leslie loved at all, Jack felt sure that he loved profoundly and passionately: it was a passion that would possibly colour all his life. As for himself, had it not been for Leslie, he would not have been there cogitating at that moment; and so far as any rivalry of his was concerned, Leslie might

have walked over the course. But then, on the other hand, he had lived and he had prospered: that he was there, was a fact there was no getting over. In this life we must take things as we find them, and make the best of the most untoward circumstances. He loved his cousin at least as much as Leslie loved her, though even in those transports of his the thought would still come, that he might console himself more easily than Leslie for a rejection. He loved his cousin as much as Leslie loved her, and it was with his cousin that the decision must rest. If she preferred him, as was possible, she would say so more or less frankly, and in that

case it would be cruelty to cross her affections. Then, in a worldly point of view, he was undoubtedly the more eligible suitor. Leslie had but a small fixed income at best; and though poetry might bring him fame, it could scarcely lead on to lucre. While as Grace's husband, with his own elastic prospects, he must have a very great deal in his power. Moray might consent to take from a son-in-law what he would never accept from anybody else. If he would not bring himself to condescend to pecuniary assistance, he might consent to avail himself of political influence. By the interest of Lord Wrekin, or somebody else, Jack thought he might get his uncle something good in the colonies. It would be no job. Moray knew the East thoroughly; he had all the qualities of an able administrator: under any Government, whether Radical or Conservative, surely the thing might be managed. At all events, matters must be settled somehow, for, above all things, he detested suspense. Grace should either put him out of his misery, as he was pleased to phrase it, or assure him that she was willing to make him happy. He determined, if possible, to get the interview over at once; but how to have a *tête-à-tête* was the question. After wandering alone about the woods through the morning—after not making her appearance as usual at lunch,—Grace would feel doubly bound to do the civil to Miss Winstanley in the afternoon. In any case, and on the off-chance of some arrangement, he would look into the drawing-room, though disinclined for conversation.

The stars in their courses fought in his favour, and Miss Winstanley conspired with the celestial bodies. She and her father, with Grace, were the only occupants of the

drawing-room. Julia was as quick as Grace to remark Mr Venables's preoccupation, and she readily found an excuse for removing her father from the room. Then as Jack was pulling himself together for a plunge into his subject, to his astonishment Grace anticipated him.

"I am so glad to have you alone for an instant, Jack. Indeed I had thought of writing you a note, only I could not send it by a servant. Will you meet me an hour hence at the seat by the waterfall, and you won't mind waiting if I should be detained? Say 'yes' quickly, for there is somebody coming."

Jack looked yes, if he did not say it. The M'Claverty burst into the room like a modified Highland hurricane, only that the chief was brimming over with good-humour, and meant no mischief. He had shaken off his young hostess's troubles already, as a water-spaniel coming out of the water throws the showers of spray from his coat. Grace, with the hypocrisy instinctive to the best of women, had already taken a piece of worsted-work into her hands, and was lending a seemingly attentive ear to some meaningless remark of the intruder. Jack, who was in no mood to stand on ceremony, made a bolt of it, slamming the door behind him. Quick-witted as he was, he needed time to think; yet he felt that his cousin's frankness boded no good to him. "She's not the kind of girl to throw herself into any man's arms; and if she were, mine would be paralysed: there is nothing I loathe like a willing woman. She has seen her father; she has heard what I said to him; and she is resolved that I shall labour under no misconceptions."

Jack had an hour to think, and he made the most of a good part

of it. He was one of those men who momentarily crave for a thing when they once have set their heart upon it; who desire it doubly when there are difficulties in the way; and whose desire turns to a passion when their object threatens to elude them. Grace had never seemed to him more lovable. Her beauty had been heightened by grief and agitation; there was a far-away, wistful look in her eyes which profoundly touched all that was impressionable in him; moreover, he was quite able to appreciate her higher and more estimable qualities. I need not repeat that he set a due value on money, and he would have shrunk from love in a cottage, unless it were "a cottage of gentility." He knew himself well enough to be sure that he was never made to live in huffer-mugger fashion and cater for a hungry brood. In such circumstances he must have fretted in company of the best woman in the world, and love would most likely fly out of the window. But on the other hand, any amount of fortune without love would have been far too dearly purchased; and the luxury of mating prudently with a penniless bride was one he felt to be well within his reach. In his softened mood he thought how, with a husband's opportunities, he might endear himself to the girl who inclined to him already. If he could only win her to a word of assent from the heart, their marriage might be the entrance to an earthly paradise. He thought, too, how Grace in her gentle dignity would do the honours of a handsome and hospitable home. How proud he would be of the bright girl-matron, whose portrait should smile from the panel above the dining-room chimney-piece. Who should paint

her? Should it be Leighton or Millais, or some rising artist of genius, who should —? Confound it! there he was dreaming as usual, and he knew, or at least he more than suspected, that the word of assent would never be won. Why not? Ah! there was the rub. If obstacle there was, the obstacle was Leslie. It was his practice to clear obstacles away, by fair means or by foul; and the thought that naturally occurred to him was how to clear Leslie out of his path.

Then came an equally natural revulsion of feeling. He hated himself; he shook himself in horror: to all intents and purposes he was a murderer, if not a thief; for if Grace had really given herself to Leslie, he contemplated stealing her away. And to this man whom he meant to wrong and rob he had vowed eternal gratitude. Looking up at those wild Highland hills, that day above Loch Rosque came vividly back to his memory. He shuddered again as he recalled his feelings when his foot had failed him, when his brain was dizzy, when there seemed nothing between the strong young life and eternity. He remembered how he had thought of being summoned to the account for which he had never found time for preparation. And then, when all appeared to be doubly over, Leslie had voluntarily exposed himself to all that he dreaded. He had said little in the way of gratitude after that daring rescue and marvellous escape, but if he said little it was only because he felt so much. He was content to be silenced by misplaced *mauvaise honte*, because he was assured that his preserver entered into his feelings. But therefore, in love and honour he was doubly bound by that tacit compact. Now the occasion was

offering duly to redeem his pledge ; nor could he have hoped for such a chance of clearing off old scores. If needful, he should rise to a sublime height of self-sacrifice ; for he really imagined at the moment that the act of resignation might entail upon him something like—lifelong suffering. He altogether forgot that he would be in no way a free agent, in that it was Grace who must really decide the matter, according to the state of her affections. But as he did forget the fact most entirely, we may give him equal credit for his self-denial. All the same, in his detestation of suspense he was eager to know the best and the worst of it ; and accordingly, after some four-and-fifty minutes of rapt meditation, he anticipated the tryst with his cousin by a quarter of an hour.

He was kept waiting and gnawing his heart for nearly half an hour longer ; and when he did see Grace ascending the path, his hopes sank even lower than they had fallen already. No amount of mere maiden diffidence could explain the lingering pace of those light feet, and that listless and pre-occupied gait. Had she been on her way to make a waiting lover happy, the shy timidity must have been buoyantly elastic. Her eyes, when she raised them to his, were full of a sad sympathy ; and as he saw how deeply she believed him to be in love, he felt more passionately and desperately in love with her than ever.

For a minute or more both were silent, and the silence began to become painfully embarrassing. Jack, whose manliness was unimpeachable, felt bound in his chivalry to be the first to break it. Interpreted by the expression of her face, it had rung the knell of his hopes as clearly as any

words could have done ; and possibly he might have shown more delicacy of feeling had he taken it for his answer, and spoken on the strength of it. But when it is a case of parting with our cherished hopes or illusions, we are slow to fling the haft after the blade ; and it was one of Jack's fundamental principles never to throw away a chance. Besides, although he was showing himself most practically disinterested, it was not in his nature to rise to those refined heights of generosity of which Ralph might have been capable. If he could not win his cousin and her love, at least by way of compensation he would have as much gratitude as she could give him. And that essential difference in the character of the two men may explain her preference for the one over the other.

Most men in the circumstances, even if they had delivered their minds, would have done so as the depressed or despairing lover. Jack did not. He began by affecting the modest confidence he did not feel ; and as he fairly warmed to what would otherwise have been a pleasant task, he pressed his suit with fire and fervour. And the girl felt more sorry for him than before, as he spoke much of love and little of money. Money, indeed, he could not altogether pass over ; but he spoke lightly of his longing to be able to help her father at the slightest possible sacrifice to Moray's pride.

"It may all come so naturally and so easily, Grace. Surely he will accept anything from you ; and if you will only take me, he cannot make distinctions between his children. You know how fervently I have loved you from the very first. You know that nothing could have sealed my lips but the sense that I had nothing, while

you were an heiress. You know—you must have known—that as I began to feel my feet, the ambition of winning you made each step a triumph. I counted the months before I dared speak, and the months were passing so slowly yet so quickly. May heaven forgive me for it! but when I heard of your ruin, I believe at first it brought me more happiness than sorrow. I *am* confoundedly selfish," he interpolated, with penitent self-conviction. "And now, if you cannot speak to me as I could wish, the punishment of my selfishness will be greater than I can bear. But you cannot, surely, have the heart to throw me back on my worse self, and doom me to a life of selfish isolation? My future, for weal or woe, as for good or evil, is in your hands; and my fate is hanging on what you have to say to me."

Jack paused to draw breath, and indeed it was high time. He had talked himself into profound self-conviction, and the pleading eloquence of his eyes expressed as much. As for Grace, she had never doubted him; and for once, all womanly as she was, she regretted the power of her charms. Had Leslie ever spoken as Jack had done—had he ever breathed a word on which she could found a promise of fidelity,—her course would have been clear, however painful. As it was, she hesitated; and as Jack saw her hesitation, his hopes revived. After all, he might be mistaken; and so once more, and this time with an easier conscience, he opened again the flood-gates of his eloquence. If Grace's hesitation gave him hope, he made a fatal mistake. As he talked on, she kindly listened, for she knew all he had to say. She was imagining what would be their future if she spoke the irrevocable 'yes.'

And in her rapid self-searching, she as rapidly decided that she would do foul injustice to him as to herself. Leslie had never spoken, it was true, but for reasons similar to those that had kept Jack silent. She trusted his sincerity as she trusted herself, and she felt that he had made his meaning unmistakable. She could not change her heart from an impulse of kindness—not even because the change might be for the benefit of her father—and she knew that her heart was given to Leslie beyond recall. It was through his family that hers had been indirectly brought to grief, and what must he think of her if she threw him over in the circumstances? It was her melancholy lot to have to choose between two devoted lovers; and she must give pain to one or the other. But there could be no further doubt as to the decision. And as she came to that conclusion, her dimpled chin and her under lip took something of her father's firmness; and Jack, whose eyes were fixed on her face, felt, with a tremor, that it was all over. Then his own resolution was taken with his habitual promptitude. His hopes were already things of the past, and he would have leisure enough to make any moan over them. Now he must grasp the fleeting opportunity, and rise at once to the rôle of the generous. As Grace, all in a tremble, was going to speak, he took the words out of her mouth:—

"I have my answer, and I will spare you the pain of speaking it. I reverence you enough to know that if I were to talk on for hours, I could not bring you to change your decision. Nor do I desire it, things being as they are. I am not one of those who would strive to win my wife's heart after marriage—least of all, when I have to

contend with such a rival as Leslie. Forgive me," he added hastily, as he saw his cousin flush up; "you may well pardon me in the circumstances, and I have no thought to give to the proprieties—even to the delicacies. But I must win free pardon by frank confession; and for days, for months past, my doubts and fears have all been excited by a single man."

Grace could say nothing. She could not confess an attachment which had never been avowed.

Jack, with his quick wits preternaturally sharpened, again came to help her out of her embarrassment. She could almost have wished that her affections had been free, that she might have given them to him frankly and gratefully. He took her hand; and in the certainty that he understood her, she left it in his, and softly returned the pressure.

"Not another word—don't say another word; we are friends as we are cousins, are we not? and friends we shall ever continue. Or rather, we must remain brother and sister; I have a right to claim as much as that. But be sure I shall ask no question which you might find it difficult to answer. Remember that I owe my life to somebody, and in time that remembrance must bring me consolation. And now," he went on, with a touch of bitterness, "if I must not speak of love, we may talk of business. You feel that you owe me something, do you not? For after all, I offered you

all I have to offer, and you have struck a blow in return you would gladly have spared me."

"You are the most lovable, the most generous of men, Jack!" exclaimed Grace, with a flood of tears that at last found vent.

"For heaven's sake, don't break down like that!" expostulated Jack, piteously, "or I shall have to follow suit; and it is a sorrow I dare not console you under. And do not say I am the most lovable of men," he said, as he tried to smile, "for I would still believe in your truth if I cannot have your affection. But I have yet another favour to demand, and you can be in no mood for refusing."

In her certainty as to what that favour was, Grace was again forced to remain silent.

"You must promise me for your father's sake, as for mine, that this shall make no difference as to money matters. You must promise that you will labour heart and soul to give me the poor comfort of being able to help you out of these troubles of yours. And for Leslie's sake as well, for you know I owe him this troublesome life of mine."

Perhaps Grace showed herself as generous as Jack, when, looking straight with her swimming eyes into his, she drew a long breath and said, "I promise." And by way of seal to the pledge, she frankly tendered him her cheek, and for a second time that day he took a cousinly kiss, though in circumstances sadly different.

A SCOTTISH DAME ON HER TRAVELS, 1756.

LORD COCKBURN was privileged to know the last surviving Scottish ladies of the old school, and himself pronounced a fitting eulogium on their characteristics,—on their spirit, their humour, their courage, their independence, which made them stand out, he says, “like primitive rocks above ordinary society.” “Their qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit were embodied in curious outsides; for they all dressed, and spoke, and did exactly as they chose—their language, like their habits, entirely Scotch, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes mistaken for.” The pity is, that so few means have been spared us of recalling the personalities of these grand dames with whom the last sparks of Scottish character appear to have been extinguished. They were not, as a rule, letter-writers—the passion for memoirs did not exist in their day—and they have come down to us mainly as the heroines of some eccentricity, or the authors of some shrewd saying or absurd remark. What a field for observation a Mr Pepys or a Horace Walpole would have found in the society of the Scottish capital towards the middle years of the last century! What graphic pictures might we not have had of old Lady Stair *en pleine cour* at Holyrood three times striking the floor with her cane, and each time proclaiming the Earl of Dundonald “a damned villain”; or of that beautiful hoyden Jane Maxwell, afterwards Duchess of

Gordon, riding on a pig, with her not less lovely sister Eglantine, the future Lady Wallace of Craigie, acting as driver; or of the witty Lady Dick in male attire engaged in even more questionable frolics in the High Street, and brawling with the watch; or yet more pleasing retrospect, Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, the grandest and fairest of great ladies, heading the procession of eight sedans ablaze with gilt and armorial bearings, in which she and her seven daughters, not less fair than herself, were being carried towards the old Assembly Rooms! A curious mixture of high-descended dignity and simplicity must the leaders of Scottish fashion have presented, if we can believe Pate-in-Peril’s somewhat rash assertion, that “a tartan screen, and once a-year a new cockernony from Paris, should serve a countess.” They passed, and left only their traces in the beauties which they lent to the canvases of Ramsay, Aikman, and Raeburn, and the traditional traits which have been handed down to us as oddities of their generation; and if we picture to ourselves the Scottish lady of the last century, we are most readily tempted to fall back upon that delightful idealisation of all her higher qualities, Sir Walter Scott’s Mrs Bethune Baliol.

We were perhaps somewhat hasty in complaining that, beyond portraits and grotesque anecdotes, Scotch ladies of the last century have left no remains behind them. The ponderous tomes of the Club-

Letters and Journals of Mrs Calderwood of Polton, 1756. Edited by Alexander Fergusson, Lieutenant-Colonel, Author of ‘Henry Erskine and his Kinsfolk.’ Edinburgh: David Douglas.

books have guarded the intellectual part of not a few of them as safely, and almost as undisturbedly, as the heavy headstones crowded with heraldic devices, cherubs, death's-heads, and cross-bones have protected their material dust. Such, for instance, has been the case of Mrs Calderwood of Polton, whose intellectual life lay entombed in that weighty quarto the 'Coltness Collections' for more than half a century, until it has been resuscitated by Colonel Fergusson, the accomplished biographer of 'Henry Erskine and his Kinsfolk.' Except that she was a lady who took advantage of all the freedom of language accorded to her generation, little has hitherto been generally known of Mrs Calderwood beyond the limited circle of Club-book readers; and Colonel Fergusson has shown us excellent reasons for saying that this is much to be regretted. By a judicious selection from her correspondence contained in the 'Coltness Collections,' and by editing her letters into a continuous narrative, he has succeeded in placing before us a most vigorous and lifelike personality of the writer. There is but little of the antique about Mrs Calderwood; her duplicate might still be found among Scotchwomen, although we might have to seek for it some degrees further down the social scale. Her strongly marked individuality will probably appear even less singular to our more liberal notions than it must have done to her contemporaries. We can imagine her as a woman of keen wit and a sharp tongue, possessed of a dangerous power of effective ridicule, and a disposition to employ it when her feelings or her prejudices were at work; a mind as much disposed to look at matters from a profane as from a pious point of view; a kindly, shrewd, energetic, hot-tempered, and withal hot-headed person.

Mrs Calderwood possessed the advantage, unusual to the great mass of her countrywomen, of having been a travelled Scotchwoman; and it is owing to her travels, and to the journals which she kept, and the letters which she wrote to her friends at home, that we are able at the present day to make her acquaintance so closely. There is a vein of romance connected with Mrs Calderwood's expedition which must be opened. She was the wife of Mr Calderwood of Polton, who may exhaustively be described as a "douce" Scotch laird. He was a Whig and she was a Whig, being a granddaughter of Sir James Steuart of Goodtrees, and connected by blood or marriage with all the leading families of the Covenant and the Revolution. To such a couple the defeat of Culloden, it might have been thought, could only have proved a source of un-mixed rejoicing. Yet it brought a heavy cloud over the house of Polton, and condemned its master and mistress to brave the dangers of the German Ocean, and to sojourn for a season among the depressed and ruined adherents of the Stuarts in their Continental retreats. For Mrs Calderwood's elder brother, Sir James Steuart of Coltness, had in some inexplicable way—and indeed there are not a few points in his history that need clearing up—fallen away from the political creed of his fathers, had become a rank Jacobite, and although he had never taken the field, was included among the proscribed adherents of the Chevalier. It seems strange that a gentleman who had ostensibly taken so small a part in the rising of the Forty-five should have continued to be excluded from the clemency of the Crown after many more active participators had received a free pardon. Sir James Steuart evidently considered himself the vic-

tim of special persecution at the hands of the Crown authorities. Writing to his brother-in-law, the Earl of Buchan, from the Continent, in 1746, he thus complains: "I am sure there cannot be the least proof against me of high treason. . . . That I am deeply suspected I know very well, and that I was looked upon as a furious Jacobite by many; but, good God! is that a reason to class me in a bill of attainder without having some sort of evidence of my being guilty of high treason?" Cautiously as Sir James had acted, there can be no question that he had played an active and secret part in Jacobite diplomacy, which, with all the other intrigues of St Germain, did not escape George II.'s Ministers. His wife, Lady Frances Charteris, the "flower of the Wemyss family," was as enthusiastic a Jacobite as her brother Lord Elcho, and shortly after their marriage he appears to have gone abroad in the interest of the house of Stuart. Among the Stuart papers there are various traces to be found of his activity. For instance, we find him at Ghent in August 1745, when on the point of leaving to join the Prince in Scotland, writing to the Chevalier de St George:—

"I am now pleased finding that I have been able to be of some use here, and like to be of much more, by carrying to my Prince and country the glorious resolutions of the Kings of France and Spain, who have charged me by their Ministers to acquaint his Royal Highness and nobles of Scotland that they shall support him and the King his father's cause with all their force by sea, land, &c. . . . I shall make a good regiment in the country to serve my King, and I hope do better service there, that I hope in God there will be an invitation to the King soon to come to this country upon good grounds."

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Probably prudence and the persuasions of his Whig kinsfolk served to restrain his enthusiasm when he reached Scotland, although they did not prevent him from completely identifying himself with the Jacobite party. He had been a pensioner of St Germain, and had also lent his talents to the difficult subject of Jacobite finance. The Chevalier de St George, writing to Sir James in September 1746, remarks, "that with the money you brought back from Scotland, you will have a good deal of the Spanish money still in your hands," which cannot be better applied than in relieving the necessities of the unfortunate exiles. There is extant, too, a draft commission to Sir James, dated December 1746, to represent the Prince's interests at the Court of France, where he was a *persona grata* to the Duke de Bouillon and the D'Argensons. The attempts which either Sir James or his friends at home were making to minimise his connection with the Stuart interest, and to procure his pardon, seem subsequently to have created suspicion in the French Ministers; and Sir James retired to Angoulême, where he resided until 1754, devoting himself with much success to the then infant science of political economy. Before the breaking out of the seven years' war with France, Sir James and his family migrated to Flanders, as their residence in a hostile country would not have contributed to the peace which he was still assiduously endeavouring to make with his own Government. And it was mainly to cheer her brother and his wife, whose circumstances were then apparently much depressed, that Mrs Calderwood and her husband set out upon their venturesome expedition.

Never, assuredly, was a sentimental journey chronicled by

a more practical person. From that eventful June 3, 1756, when "at 4 afternoon I set out from Poltoun and slept at Pilmure," the good dame is all eyes and ears, and, according to her own admission, not a little tongue also. Hardly has she got over the Tweed than she has to take up her testimony anent Sabbath desecration by playing at football, and to record her admiration for the unwonted, not to say unwelcome, sight of hassocks for kneeling upon in Durham Cathedral, which she drily likens to "so many Cheshire cheeses."

"I think," quoth Mrs Calderwood, "the cathedrall of Durham is the most ridiculous piece of expence I saw, to keep up such a pagentry of idle fellows in a country place, where there is nobody either to see or join with them, for there was not place for above fifty folks besides the performers."

But in spite of the air of critical superiority with which she regards the Southrons and their ways, her journey to the metropolis was not altogether profitless. By the time she reached London, she had picked up a receipt for making Stilton cheese, another for salting butter, a pretty accurate estimate of how much an "aiker" land was rented at in the different shires through which she passed, and various weighty opinions of the different breeds of cattle she had met with.

London was then excited over Admiral Byng's failure off Minorca, and Mrs Calderwood was not slow to notice and satirise the wavering views of the statesmen, and the unreasoning clamours of the populace. Her sense of reverence, never very strong, quite deserts her when she discovers that Ministers of State, instead of answering to the grand ideas which she had entertained of them, were

"a parcell of old ignorant senseless bodies, who mind nothing but eating and drinking, and rolling about in Hyde Park."

"There is no depending on news at London," she continues; "there was a lye coined for every day I was there, and every one of them the English believed, providing it was agreeable. And the Court is no better informed than the vulgar: for, providing there are two lyes raised in one day, a good one in the forenoon; then the Duke of Newcastle drinks Mr Byng's health at dinner: out comes a defeat in the afternoon; he damns Mr Byng for a scoundrell. Out goes one of the Princess's masters to Kew; he tells Mr Byng has defeat the French. The Prince of Wales hears it; then it comes, Who told you, Henry Penry? At last it lands on the French dancing-master, who lays it on a Hanoverian officer, whose name he knew not. So the reports go abroad."

Mrs Calderwood could only speak of the Court by report, and indeed only saw fashionable society from side views at Ranelagh and Vauxhall. She does not endorse the general verdict on Mary Gunning, the Countess of Coventry's beauty, but regards her as "a pert, stinking-like hussy." "She was in dishabille, and very shabby drest, but was painted over her very jaw-bones." The good lady of Polton never once allows herself to be betrayed into admiration. London and its society she regards from a tolerant, not to say patronising point of view, that would have been infinitely amusing to contemporary Cockneys could they have been privileged to read and gifted to understand her correspondence. She is, however, disposed to be pleased with Greenwich Hospital, which she pronounces "a ridiculous fine thing," and remarks that "no wonder the English are transported with a place they can see about them in." But on the whole, she

views the sights of London very much in the spirit of Richie Moniplies, who unblushingly maintained the superiority of the Edinburgh West Port to the Whitehall gateways of the great Holbein, and of the Water of Leith and the Nor' Loch as navigable rivers compared to the Thames. Even in the matter of English cookery, with which her countrymen were popularly supposed not to quarrel, Mrs Calderwood is not to be appeased:—

“As for their victualls they make such a work about, I cannot enter into the taste of [them]; or rather, I think, they have no taste to enter into. The meat is juicy enough, but has so little taste, that if [you] shut your eyes, you will not know by either taste or smell what you are eating. The lamb and veall look as if they had been blanched in water. The smell of dinner will never intimate that it is on the table. No such effluvia as beef and cabbage was ever found at London. I never used to be fond of bacon or salt things, and did not reflect upon it, till after that I ate of them whenever I could, as it was without thinking but that it was better than it used to be, till I considered and found that it had been from its having more taste that made me have a naturall desire for it. I am not surprised the English run into French cookry, or to speak with so much pleasure of rashers of bacon or of roasted beef, for their beef and bacon are their best.”

Their London business despatched, the Calderwoods journeyed to Harwich, and took the Government packet across to Helvoetsluys. The lady's account of this doleful voyage has been frequently quoted; and if our memory serves us rightly, her editor has somewhat toned down the eloquent force of her description. Suffice it to say, that a cross wind compelled them to cast anchor off the coast of Suffolk, “when every one fell a-vomiting, and there was such sighing and

groaning in the two cabins as I never heard the like.”

“Mr Calderwood had got possession of the state-room, and there lay he snug, with the door shut, very squeamish. There was such a stink below that I durst not go down, so sat above till it was almost dark; then down and into bed as soon as possible, very, very squeamish. I could not keep my feet in the cabin, and it was such an operation betwixt John [John Rattray, their servant] and me to get off some of my clothes, and to get on my night-clothes, that had anybody been inclined to laugh, they might have had a good subject. I at last got to bed, but such a night I think I never will forget.”

The reader may, with profit and amusement, follow Mrs Calderwood's footsteps through Holland from Rotterdam to Delft and the Hague, where the Dutch Court was at that time presided over by the mother of the young Stadtholder, Princess Anne, daughter of George II. The frugal and industrious Dutch impress Mrs Calderwood more favourably than her own neighbours across the Tweed; but she complains that “almost none of them have the look of gentlemen or ladies.” She finds the “vivers” dear; but “their cookery is preferable to ours in all manner of stews and stoved things.” They travel on a *trekschuyt* from the Hague to Amsterdam, commanded by a skipper who “sits on his hungkers”; and on the way she finds time to recall the following anecdote of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, the well-known Scottish Republican and anti-Unionist:—

“Saltoun could not endure the smoak of tobacc, and as he was in a night-scoot, the skipper and he fell out about his forbidding him to smoak. Saltoun, finding he could not hinder him, went up and sat on the ridge of the boat, which bows like an arch.

The skipper was so contentious that he followed him, and on whatever side Salton sat he put his pipe in the cheek next him and whifed it in his face. Salton went down severall times, and brought up stones in his pocket from the ballast, and slipt them into the skipper's pocket that was next the water, and when he found he had loadened him as much as would sink him, he gives him a shove so that over he hirsled. The boat went on, and Salton came down amongst the rest of the passengers, who probably were asleep, and fell asleep amongst the rest. In a little time bump came the scoot against the side, on which they all damned the skipper; but behold when they called there was no skipper, which would breed no great amazement in a Dutch company.

Flanders, however, does not yield the same gratification to Mrs Calderwood as Holland had done. Her Scottish Puritanism rises in furious wrath at the Church of Rome, and she writes so that her editor has been obliged to exercise his judgment in excising the more offensive remarks; and he might, without much indiscretion, have gone a little further. Mrs Calderwood indulges to the full in that coarse ridicule which—since the time when, in David Lindsay's hands, it had proved a most efficacious instrument in breaking the keys of Rome—has always been in high favour with Scottish controversialists. Mrs Calderwood wields these antique weapons with admirable skill; and we scarcely know whether we ought to be shocked at her utter lack of Christian charity or amused at her profane absurdities, which, although less refined, recall the language which Voltaire much about the same time was making use of. Flanders was then full of English and Scottish priests. The religious houses were crowded with ladies

of the unfortunate families who had suffered in the cause of the Stuarts. The lady of Polton was as much an adept in the art of extracting information as a modern newspaper interviewer, and she managed to get many curious details of monastic and conventual life from the Scotch priests and sisters whom she encountered, which are not the less readable for her own pungent criticisms.

It was at Spa that the Calderwoods succeeded in meeting their relations; and they found the famous watering-place crowded with their countrymen, both Georgians and Jacobites, and with many notabilities from the Continental States besides. We may note *en passant* that Flanders at that time seems to have been regarded as a sort of quarantine for the British exiles, in which, away from the open influence of France, they might qualify themselves for the pardon which their friends were striving to procure for them. There was also the usual assemblage of adventurers, sharpers, Jews, and eccentrics, who furnished Mrs Calderwood with excellent material for study and description. Some of her countrymen at least were thriving, for there was a public room kept by a Mr Hay, "who was long about my Lady Errol," and who also managed a "faro bank," which had more attractions for the majority of visitors than the twice-a-week dances. Mrs Calderwood attributes this to the awkwardness of the women of the country, who cannot go through a country-dance, but "hobble, hobble, and never stir a foot."

"There was a family of Jews there, Minheir Pinto, from Amsterdam, his lady, daughter, and son-in-law, another daughter and two sons, the oddest-like animals ever was seen, with high noses, and black round eyes

set close to them, like so many owls. They were the keenest dancers, and the worst at it ever was. After the company had looked with wonder at their dancing for several nights, and the men had begun to shun dancing with them (for they always asked them), Lady Hellen (daughter of Lord Wemyss, and sister-in-law of Sir James Steuart) and Lord Garless (Garlies) danced a strathspey minuet: whenever the Jews saw that, they fell to it, they lap, they flaughtered so like hens with their feet tied together, that you might have bound the whole company with a straw; and they were delighted."

But there were more accomplished personages at the "Spaw" who sat to Mrs Calderwood for their portraits, and with whom we have made acquaintance elsewhere. There was the rich Mr Spencer, afterwards the first Earl—then a young man travelling with his governor, but already married. His mother-in-law, Mrs Poyntz, commanded the party; "a deaf, short-sighted, loud-spoken, hackney-headed wife." There was, too, the Prince Bishop of Osnaburgh, "a very civil body, just like Mr Cunninghame the packman." Then came Sir Thomas Worsley and his wife, and her brother Lord Dunbarven, and their cousin Lord Boyle—who had a bad temper and a "strong Irish brog"—and various military ladies, with whom Mrs Calderwood had some difficulty in hitting it off. To the social comminglings of these people, and to the inevitable scandals which float in the air of a watering-place, Mrs Calderwood does full justice; and we know of no work in which English life at a Continental spa in the eighteenth century has been so humorously and graphically described as in her letters.

The Calderwoods had taken from home with them two Scotch servants, whose remarks and ex-

periences furnish much amusement throughout the letters. We have already seen John Rattray acting as lady's-maid to Mrs Calderwood during the eventful night on board the packet. We may now quote the following story of his linguistic difficulties:—

"We often got good sport with John's French and the mistakes that happened betwixt him and her [Lady Frances Steuart]. They wanted to have a *haggas*, but John said we must set our hearts by [beyond] that, for he had seen nothing like meall in that town. That day Mr Calderwood had bid the landlady get him some hony, so when she was counting with John at night there was an article for *mie*. 'Meall!' says John; 'devil a grain have I seen in your country! no, no, madam—no, no,' and shook his head.

"Upon this she came to Mr Calderwood, who put John right, and told the woman what he had mistaken it for; upon which she produced meal, to the great joy of the company, who by this mistake got a *haggas*.

"I asked John one day how they called the maid of the house.

"'I don't know,' says he, 'how they call the wemen-servants here, but they call us men *dumbsticks*.'

"'Troth,' says I, 'you are really well named at *present*.'

"However, John was very happy, for there were many Scots and English dumbsticks there with whom he made merry. . . . Then comes Peggie Rainy.

"'O sir!' says she, 'I was learning French with Mr Hair and Mr Line, and you laught me out of [it]. I would have been a fine speaker if it had not been for you, but you said I was too old, and now I'm older and will never learn.'

"Indeeds he said true, for if she was told how to ask for a thing, she forgot or she was at the foot of the stair. Then she thought she would do like daft Jock and repeat it all the way: so one day she was wanting to walk to a fountain called the *Tonelet*, and after being directed the road was desired to ask anybody she met if that was the road to the *Tonelet*,

and thought she had got a fast grip of '*le chemin à la Tonnelet*.'

"'*Chambeing toutalon*,' says she to every one she met, and returned without finding the place. 'Ay,' says she, 'I that came from Edinburgh to Liege as if I had been led by a string, not to find a place within a mile of Spaw!'"

It is gratifying to know that the Calderwoods had their brother restored to them shortly after the accession of George III., when Sir James Steuart was permitted to return home, and to live quietly on his estate. It was not, however, before the breach which had been gradually widening between the French Court and Sir James resulted in his arrest at Spa in 1762, and his imprisonment in the fortress of Givet until the conclusion of the war. The French Government was scarcely to be blamed for this measure of precaution, illegal though it doubtless was; for Sir James, standing on the borderland between the Stuarts and the English Government, and sharing the secrets of the former while he was most anxious to secure the friendship and forgiveness of the latter, was certainly a person dangerous to French interests. When and in what manner Sir James succeeded in finally disentangling himself from the Jacobite cause, has never been fully set forth. His friends and biographers have carried their endeavours to extenuate his connection with Jacobitism to an extent which

presents us with quite a misleading view of his connection with that movement; and Colonel Fergusson has shown less than his usual critical insight in so unreservedly accepting their statements. Sir James as a politician does not figure to advantage. As a thinker and a writer, of a school much in advance of his age, he has never received the consideration which he deserves. As the earliest expositor in this country of Political Economy as a distinct science, he is entitled to no small amount of the credit which is usually bestowed on his better known successor Adam Smith.

We presume the time is not far off when many of the other Club-books are to be rifled in the same way as the "Coltness Collections" have been made to yield their treasures. These monuments of editorial acumen and patient research are, it is to be feared, sealed books to this generation of superficial readers, while so many sources of interest are buried within their boards that they present a most inviting field for the enterprising *littérateur*. If such be the inevitable fate of the Bannatyne, Abbotsford, Roxburghe, and Spalding store-houses, we can only wish that they may be assailed with the same taste and literary skill as have produced the delightful volume which we now lay down.

STORIES FROM BOJARDO.

ORLANDO.

AT Scandiano, a castle at the foot of the Apennines, seven miles from Reggio, was born in the year 1434 Matteo Bojardo, who from thence took his title of Count. He held various public offices, and died, aged sixty, governor of Reggio, having been loved and trusted by his feudal superiors, the Dukes of Ferrara. But with his active employments he combined a great love for letters—fruits of which were his numerous translations from classic authors and his Latin Eclogues. More important than these were his contributions to the vast collection of Italian sonnets and odes, in which the affection kindled in his heart by an other-

wise nameless Rosa, by Antonia Caprara, and (let us hope) by the noble Taddea Gonzaga, whom he married after these youthful flirtations ended, found expression. His biographer, Panizzi, pronounces that, "of all the lyrical poets of his age, Bojardo is undoubtedly the most simple and pathetic," and considers him as honourably distinguished from the servile copyists of Petrarch by outpourings of natural feeling more like those of his predecessors than of his successors. Here is one specimen. His lady-love is absent, and Bojardo apostrophises her drooping flowers:—

Discoloured flowerets, violets turned white,
That softly wave as moves the wanton air,
Where has your lady gone? ah! tell me; where
Has gone the sun that used to give you light?
"When the sun went, then went our lady bright,
Who daily made our beauties grow more fair;
And, since such good is 'reft us, we despair,
And how we grieve display to all men's sight."
Unhappy violets, flowers unfortunate,
Forsaken of the warmth and light divine
That you that radiance clear was wont to lend!
"Thou sayest sooth: us in our roots hard fate
Thus smites, but thou in deepest heart dost pine
For loss that leads thee with us to thine end."

Another opens prettily. We may receive the Lady Taddea's con-suppose it written on the poet's sent to be his:—

Give me full-handed roses, lilies, shed
Around me flowers, chief the sweet violet;
Let each whose eyes were by my sorrows wet,
Pluck the fruit with me by my joy disspread.
Give to me flowers, pure white and blushing red,
Let their fair colours be together set;
Odours of love breathe round me, mingling met,
That place may with my thought to match be led.
For pardon on me has my gentle foe,
With peace bestowed, and wills to save my life,
Since pity is her chiefest boast and praise.
Then marvel not that with pure fires I glow,
Since marvel rather 'tis that in such strife
Of gladness my poor heart to burst delays.

But undoubtedly Bojardo's best title to remembrance is to be found in his '*Orlando Innamorato*.' To him belongs the glory of having projected and partly carried out a vast epic poem—widely different, indeed, from the classic epos, yet with powers and graces of its own—which our own Milton read with delight, and which Ariosto gained world-wide fame by finishing. Eclipsed, indeed, by the far more renowned '*Orlando Furioso*,' it is yet fair to claim a reading for Bojardo's verse, on the ground that without it the early part of Ariosto's story is not fully intelligible; and that also—however more vigorously depicted by the later poet—all his principal characters are transferred by him from the pages of the earlier to his own. Charlemain himself, and his paladins Orlando, Rinaldo, Oliver, Ogier, and the traitor Gano, are each of them personages, not, indeed, invented by Bojardo, but presented by him in their Italian dress ready to his successor's hand. The very names of Ariosto's Saracen warriors are often due to his forerunner, who introduces us to Ferraguto, Gradasso, Sacripante, and Mandricardo; and who is said, while pondering out hunting what name would best suit his fiercest African chieftain, to have been suddenly struck by the appropriateness of Rodomonte,¹ and to have straightway ridden home and set the bells of the church of Scandiano a-ringing for joy at his discovery. Bojardo paints to us the fierce Amazon Marphisa in even stronger colours than those used afterwards by Ariosto, and provides for him the true hero and heroine of the '*Orlando Furioso*' in Ruggier and Bradamante; while the vagrant

Angelica is his peculiar and unique property, dropped afterwards by Ariosto almost too hastily for his reader's perfect satisfaction.

For Bojardo may claim the somewhat doubtful praise of having taught Ariosto how to desert the old romancers' track in one most important respect. Their tales showed the Paladins, especially Orlando, not as lovers, but as warriors. Pulci, Bojardo's contemporary, followed their guidance in the serious portions of his '*Morgante*.' To him Orlando is simply the faithful spouse of the fair Alda; to whom some of his latest thoughts are given when he is about to die on the fatal field of Roncesvalles, as a brave knight and a Christian should, clasping the cross on his good sword Durindana to his heart. But Bojardo was a bold innovator. Stimulated by the popularity of the love-tales of King Arthur's Court, he resolved on making Orlando love as passionately as Lancelot; and on making love, not ambition, the mainspring of his poem. Its very title, "*The Enamoured Orlando*," was a contradiction to the old "*Song of Roland*"; while it bespoke beforehand a favourable hearing from men like Bojardo's contemporaries, more disposed to lend ear to

"The idle singer of an empty day,"

than to hearken to the call to ascend the hill which Virgil and Dante climbed together.

Yet, though very popular in its own day, the '*Orlando Innamorato*,' as Bojardo wrote it, is now a poem difficult of access. It has been replaced to the ordinary Italian reader by one in which Berni dismissed the elder poet's Lombardisms for pure Florentine expressions, and endeavoured to

¹ The father of our "rodomontade."

smooth his rugged versification into harmony with the ease and grace of Ariosto;—as Dryden, at a greater distance of time, retold Chaucer's "Knights Tale," and taught his Palamon and Arcite the language of the Court of Charles the Second. In so doing both often spoiled what they tried to improve. Men still turn with pleasure from the sonorous couplets of Pope and Dryden to Chaucer's "well of Englishe undefyled." And Panizzi, to whom we owe so good an edition of the two 'Orlandos,' says, that "candid and competent judges will often be compelled to admit that the lines of the old bard are superior to those of Berni." But the story being the same, men have been generally contented to use this later version; and so Berni has been remembered, and Bojardo, to whom belongs all the merit (such as it is) of the invention of the poem, has been forgotten,—hidden by him unjustly on the one side, and on the other justly overshadowed by the superior fame of Ariosto.

The oblivion to which his work has been consigned has been reflected by outward circumstances. The paintings which his descendant had made to illustrate his poem have vanished from the walls of Scandiano's castle: "the halls where ladies and knights listened to the adventures of the Paladins are now used as granaries. Even the great Paladin Orlando was vainly intrusted with the wardenship of the place. He was painted in full armour, standing giant-like behind the gate of the castle, to defend its entrance. Scarcely any trace now remains of the hero's features. That time should have destroyed these perishable monuments, consecrated to the glory of Bojardo," adds Panizzi, from whom this account is taken, "is not, however, so extraordinary as that the poem to which Italy

owes the 'Furioso' should have been so shamefully neglected, and that the poet whose footsteps Ariosto chose to follow, should have been so ungratefully forgotten."

Shall we awaken for a brief season the echoes that have long been slumbering in the courts and galleries of that deserted castle, and listen to the song which told of the exploits and sorrows of Orlando? With him we begin, as seems fittest. But many tales, with which his own connection is of the slightest, may be extracted from the poem which bears his name; for the 'Orlando Innamorato' is, according to all the accustomed canons, a highly irregular poem. Panizzi, indeed, traces for us an orderly plan amidst its mazes, showing us how the whole story turns on Orlando's love for Angelica; how without this there would have been no invasion of France by Mandricardo, no absence of her best champion in her most critical moments. We can see dimly that this is so, can believe that a larger space would have been cleared for the hero towards the end, had not age and the misfortunes of his country paralysed Bojardo's hand, and made him break off as he does abruptly under the pressure of Charles VIII.'s invasion of Italy, to die in the December of 1494, *felix opportunitate mortis*—leaving his country in the grasp of the French intruder. But, in the long two books and fragment of a third which he has left us, the main road is so often deserted, the by-paths entered on lead through such thorny and sometimes such miry places, that a guide is needed to help us back to the forsaken highway; or else to direct us to ramble where the turf is softest, the flowers spring thickest, and the birds sing most sweetly.

Let us then follow Orlando to-

day, wherever the path looks inviting; beginning where the poem begins, at Charlemain's court plenary in Paris.

The Emperor is seated on his golden chair at his Round Table, looking on his Paladins and the splendidly attired barons and ladies of his Court. A general truce has been proclaimed, and therefore many Saracens from Spain are reposing as the Emperor's guests on soft carpets and cushions spread for their accommodation. Into this scene of mirth and festivity there enters a lovely lady, Angelica, Princess of Cathay, attended by her brother Argalia. The original of Tasso's Armida, this beautiful enchantress has been commissioned by her wily father, Galaphron, to steal as many champions away as possible from the defence of Christendom. Her brother, who bears a charmed lance of gold before which every opponent must fall, challenges the assembled

chivalry, and promises his sister's hand as the reward of victory. The challenge, indeed, proves ultimately fatal to himself, as he is slain a few days later by the stout Saracen Ferraguto, and his wonder-working lance passes into the keeping of Astolpho. But before this happens, Angelica's beauty has produced strange effects. When she first enters the festal hall, guarded by her attendant giants and by her brother, the fairest ladies of the Court look fair no longer:—

"The morning-star she seemed, the lily bright,
The garden's crown and choicest rose
of bowers."

When she has preferred her request to the Emperor, and kneeling awaits his answer to her brother's challenge, every man present looks at her with wonder; but Orlando is the most moved of all. His countenance changes, his heart trembles, and he chides himself, but vainly, for his folly:—

30.

"Ah, fool Orlando!" in his heart he said,
"Why let thyself at will be borne away?
Canst thou not see thine error, but misled
From God must farther yet and farther stray?
By what strange fortune whither am I sped?
A helpless captive, I must needs obey;
I, whom the whole world could not make afraid,
Now, without arms, am vanquished by a maid."

31.

"Of that serenest face the vision sweet
I cannot sever from my inmost heart,
My life without her I can feel retreat,
My spirit step by step from me depart:
Nor strength nor courage here avail to meet
Love, who now rules me with compelling art.
Wisdom and counsel here no help can make,—
I see the better course, the worse I take."

—B. i. c. 1.

Against this passion, so overmastering although so reluctantly submitted to, all things from the first conspire. When lots are drawn for the privilege of fighting for Angelica's hand, thirty names

come out before Orlando's. And when, the combats having ended contrary to Galaphron's expectation, Rinaldo has been seen in pursuit of the brother and sister, the torments of jealousy become

more than the knight can bear. "I know not," he says, "whether this angelic being will ever condescend to love me; but whosoever shall be loved by her, will be in sooth good fortune's son, and wear the crown among the happy." So saying, he rises from his bed of weeping, disguises himself in a dark vermillion surcoat, and rides off to the forest of Ardennes.

There his search is fruitless for many days. At last cruel fate allows him one glimpse of the lady of his heart. He comes upon Angelica fast asleep in a secluded corner of the forest. Orlando gazes on her as she slumbers by a rivulet, like "a man divided from life." He dares not disturb her, where

69.

She slept by beauty so adorned that hour
Thought cannot reach it, hand far less can write;
The grass seemed bursting round her into flower,
The stream, of love discoursing at the sight.
All whom now beauty with renown doth dower,
Or in the days when beauty showed most bright,
Compared with her were like the stars in sheen
To Dian's, or like hers by sunlight seen.

—B. i. c. 3.

But while Orlando stands silent in respectful contemplation, he is suddenly attacked by Angelica's boisterous lover, Ferraguto. With hands—little as she then suspects it—red from the slaughter of her hapless brother,¹ he proceeds to measure swords for her with Orlando. The clash of arms awakes the lady, who swiftly bounds on her palfrey and rides away. Orlando's proposal to adjourn the decision of their conflict and follow her being refused, he loses her for a long season—since, disappointed in the hopes with which she came westward, the enchantress pronounces a spell, and is borne by her attendant spirits to her far-distant home in Asia.

When Orlando learns where she has gone, he prepares at once to follow her; but the road is blocked by many and diverse perils. First the knight encounters the monster Zambardo at the Bridge

of Death, and only slays him to fall entangled in his iron net, whence he is delivered by a cannibal Cyclops, who breaks its links with Orlando's own sword, in the fruitless endeavour to kill its invulnerable owner. No sooner is the Paladin free than he attacks and slays his intended devourer, and, directed by a hermit, brings out many trembling captives shut up by him, like Ulysses and his companions in the cave of Polyphemus.

But Orlando only overcomes these formidable dangers to get more hopelessly separated than ever from the object of his wishes. A courier, hastening to call Sacripante, King of Circassia, to the rescue, has informed him of Angelica's peril. She is besieged in Albracca by Agrican, King of Tartary, a suitor for her hand who, since his offer has been refused, has determined to enforce

¹ The death of Argalia, slain after the accidental loss of his magic lance, is one of the few mournful incidents of the 'Orlando Innamorato'—where the bloodiest fights, as far as the ordinary rank and file are concerned, pass with as little loss to their all but invulnerable chiefs as did the battles of the Italian *condottieri* to their well-steeled men.

its acceptance by arms. Her devoted lover sees here an opportunity to win her regard, and hastens his steps towards Cathay. But as he rides onward he falls into the toils of one of those fays whose palaces of delight are favourite subjects for Bojardo's pencil—the wily Dragontina. His road is crossed by a deep river, above which rise lofty towers. A damsel stands on the bridge that leads to them, and bids him keep the custom of the castle by drinking of its refreshing waters from a golden cup. But those deceitful waters rob the knight of all remembrance of the past. Angelica fades from his mind—so does Charlemain; nay, he ceases to know himself. As in a dream, he rides over the drawbridge into the court, and there dismounting, gazes idly on its columns of amber with golden bases, its arcades paved by white and green marbles, with roofs of gold and azure. Hence men pass to Dragontina's garden, where her numerous captives disport them-

selves. It enjoys a perpetual spring, and within its marble walls the loveliest flowers grow amid branching cedars and tall palms. On the very day of Orlando's arrival his cousin Astolpho comes there seeking for him, accompanied by Brandimarte; whose lady-love, the prudent Fiordelisa, warns them not to drink of the enchanted cup. As soon as Dragontina sees these intruders, she calls on Orlando and bids him drive them forth. He, with no thought save to obey her bidding, at once unties his steed Brigliadoro from a rose-tree, mounts him, and rides to the attack. Astolpho, amazed at the onslaught, owes his life to the powerful horse he is riding, which clears the garden wall, high as it is, at a bound, and outstrips even the fleet Brigliadoro in his flight. Brandimarte remains a prisoner.

Hence it comes that not Orlando, as he had purposed and hoped, but Astolpho, rides on to that siege of which the renown echoes even in Milton's 'Paradise Regained':—

“ When Agrican, with all his northern powers,
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowrest knights,
Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemain.”

—B. iii.

The defences are strong; the town has high walls and an almost impregnable citadel; and the Orada, which washes one side of it, is too deep to be forded even in the summer droughts. Nevertheless the Tartar king proves a most formidable assailant. Astolpho, after a brief and brilliant career of successes, is taken prisoner; Sacripante receives all but deadly wounds—the smart of which he cannot feel so long as he sees the flower of all ladies watching him from her battlements; and at length the defenders outside are

put to flight, and Agrican and his hordes ride after them through the gates into the city. Confronted there successfully for a time by Sacripante in spite of his wounds, and by the Turk Torindo, the northern host finally overpower their resistance, and force them to take refuge along with Angelica and her father in the citadel, while sword and fire rage through the hapless town.

In the castle the situation seems desperate, unprovisioned as it is, and defended by only thirty men. For a brief while Angelica sits

there lamenting the hard fate that seems delivering her up to her unwelcome wooer—with tears which her poet says might have moved a wild beast or dragon to pity her. But quickly she bethinks herself of Orlando—whose love she despises through her vain passion for Rinaldo, but whose valour she admires—and resolves to go in search of him. She is possessed of a magic ring, which, worn on the finger, nullifies all enchantments, and, placed in the mouth, makes its owner invisible. So provided, she can pass fearlessly through the invaders' camp, which she does, promising her little garrison to return with succour within twenty days, and bidding them kill their horses and live on them until then. On her adventurous ride she meets with Fiordelisa amid strange perils, and is told by her where to look for Orlando. Hastening to Dragontina's garden, she dismounts, hides her palfrey outside its walls, places the ring in her mouth, and enters them unseen. Soon she espies Orlando, fully armed, keeping watch by a fountain, with his horse grazing near him. She slips her ring on to his finger, and all Dragontina's spells are rendered fruitless in a moment. Orlando recovers his senses, and at the same instant sees the lady whom he loves so passionately standing beside him. The palace, the garden, and its encircling river vanish, and the captives of the sorceress stand round Angelica in the wild wood, and listen readily to her call to the succour of Albracca. They swear to raise its siege or perish, and placing Angelica on her steed, ride off with Orlando at their head on this most promising adventure.

Fast as they go, however, they would have arrived too late, and Truffaldino's treachery would have yielded up the fortress had not the brave Agrican contemptuously re-

fused to receive it at such vile hands. As it is, when the distressed princess and her champions, after travelling day and night, first see Albracca from an opposite hill, Galaphron's banner still waves over its citadel. So vast, however, is the camp that surrounds it, so numerous the pennons that float over the opposing forces, that Angelica forgets her ring's power, and trembles at the thought of going through them. But, against her wish, her knights insist on escorting their fair charge through the very midst of the adverse host. There are only nine of them; but they feel that they are a match for all the Tartar army. Orlando and Brandimarte ride first and clear the way; then comes Angelica encompassed by a body-guard of four; while the three others protect the rear. The beautiful face for which so many swords are drawn, turns pale as death ere the perilous charge begins. But Orlando sounds his great ivory horn, hollowed out of a single elephant's tusk—the horn that is one day to awaken the echoes of Roncesvalles; and at its sound there is no king or knight in the Tartar host who does not feel afraid—save only Agrican himself, who mounts and rides out with all his army to accept the challenge. The nine knights are hard pressed by the vast numbers opposed to them. Two of the rear-guard are at last overthrown, after performing prodigies of valour; and the four barons are so closely engaged that Angelica has to call with tears on Orlando to deliver her from the grasp of Santaria, one of the hated Agrican's soldiers. He has snatched her from her saddle, and is carrying her away from her sorely beset defenders. Orlando prepares to smite him, but the coward Tartar makes the

princess his shield. "Strike him at any risk to me," cries the desperate Angelica. But Durindana is to be put to no such use. Orlando doubles his mighty fist, dashes out her captor's brains without any risk to his lady, and bears her safe into her stronghold.

Next day he, with four knights, defies the whole besieging army. King Agrican answers the challenge alone, bidding the rank and file keep back while he measures his strength against this new opponent. He is amazed, as he well may be, to see how the blows of his strong sword Tranchera rebound harmless from the helmet which was of yore Almonte's, and from its wearer's invulnerable frame. On the other hand, Orlando, charmed by the bravery of his antagonist, prays that he may be enabled to reward it by converting him to the true faith.

Their fight cannot that day be fought out, for a relieving army advances to the walls of Albracca, under the command of the redoubtable virago Marphisa, whose assistance—formidable, as he afterwards finds to friends no less than to foes—King Galaphron has obtained. Agrican sees his own troops in peril, and thereupon beseeches Orlando, as he ever loved lady, to allow him to go to their

succour, and finish their own private combat next day : which is most valiant, the result then must show ; meantime he owns that he has found his match, although till now he had supposed that none could be such but the renowned Orlando. To the champion before him, whose name he as yet knows not, he offers his vassal kingdom of Muscovy.

No one ever appealed in vain to the Count of Brava's courtesy. The combatants part ; and Agrican's gold-circleted helm carries encouragement to his followers. But their partial success is so much impeded by Orlando, that, later in the day, Agrican sees that he can gain no victory so long as he fights in the adverse ranks ; and determines to draw him from them by a pretended flight, finish their interrupted combat, kill him, and then return to accomplish his triumph. The first part of this design he is able to carry out. The Count pursues him into a dark forest, where they fight undisturbed by a fountain. Agrican prefaces the combat by offering life to his adversary if only he will leave him undisturbed to gain his victory. "For," he says, "I call heaven and the sun to witness, that to me it is displeasure and grief to slay thee."

36.

The Count with kindly passion answer made,
Since pity now had seized upon his heart :
"The braver thou and kinglier," he said,
"The more in sooth this sorrow gives me smart
That thou, no Christian yet, must low be laid
In death, among damned souls to have thy part.
Ah ! wouldst thou but save life and soul to-day,
Let me baptise thee, and then go thy way."

37.

Said Agrican, and on him fixed his eyes :
"If Christian, thou must sure Orlando be.
Not even to be King of Paradise
Would I give up this great felicity.

But now I warn thee, and of this advise,—
Of things divine say nothing unto me,
For thou wouldst all thy preaching vainly spend :
Let each with sword in hand his faith defend.”

—B. i. c. 18.

Having so said, he proceeds to offer Tranchera as his most convincing argument; but the fight goes on without perceptible advantage to either side from noon till night. “What shall we do?” says the Count, as soon as darkness has made fighting impossible. “Sleep on the meadow,” replies Agrican, “and resume our battle with the dawn.” Orlando lies down beside the fountain; his chivalrous foe rests under a great pine-tree hard by. Before they fall asleep Orlando makes another effort for the salvation of the knight whose hard blows have won his entire esteem. “Look,” he says, “at that silver moon and at those golden stars. They as well as the sun were made by God for the benefit of the human race.” But he receives no encouragement; for Agrican rejoins, “You want to talk to me about the faith, I see. I understand no science. When I was a child I broke my only teacher’s head; and since then no

man has been willing to risk his by giving me instruction. Learning is for priests and doctors. I know enough since I know how to hunt, joust, and fight.” Orlando answers: “I agree with you that man’s chief honour lies in arms. Still knowledge adorns a brave heart as the flowers do a meadow, and he who never thinks of the eternal Creator is not much better than an ox, a stone, or a block; while without learning we cannot think aright of the supreme and lofty Divine Majesty.” Agrican is more impressed by these words than he chooses to show. But for the present he declines further discourse on matters where his ignorance places him at a disadvantage, and wishing instead to talk of arms or love, he requests his friendly foe to tell him, first, whether he is indeed the far-famed Orlando; next, why he has come to Cathay; and lastly, whether, as all knights should, he has loved.

47.

The Count replied : “ I am Orlando, he
Who Almont and his brother Trofan slew ;
Love from mine own self hath divided me,
And made me wander thus in countries new.
And, to declare my whole estate to thee,
My heart is given, her will with it to do,
Unto the daughter of King Galaphrone,
Who in Albracca’s city has his throne.

48.

“ You with great fury on her father war,
His country and his fort from him to take ;
But I by Love am led here from afar,
To please that damsel for her own dear sake.
For honour, or the Faith—our guiding-star—
I oft have fought before, but now I make
War only that fair lady to acquire ;
And nought beside there is that I desire.”

When Agrican hears not only that the foreign knight is, as he suspected, Orlando, but that so valiant a champion is his rival for the hand of Angelica, his whole countenance changes, he sighs and weeps like one distraught, and his heart is distracted by a wild tumult of jealousy. "One of us must lie dead on this turf to-morrow," he

at last exclaims passionately : "before that last fight begins, yield the maiden to me. I cannot bear that any one should love her but myself while I live : if you kill me, no one will know that you have renounced her for so short a time ; and if I kill you, you will only have given her up an hour sooner than you otherwise must."

52.

"My promises," Orlando answered, "ever I well have kept, so many as I made ; But, if what now you ask I promise, never Can I maintain it even with oaths to aid. My limbs I from my frame as soon could sever, Or mine own eyes pluck out, or disarrayed Of heart and spirit live,—as I could bear To cease to love Angelica the fair."

Enraged at this refusal, Agrican springs at once on his horse, and insists on renewing the combat, although in the dark. It goes on till long after dawn. Tremendous strokes are given on both sides ; but Agrican's only stupefy without wounding, while Orlando's draw

blood. At last Durindana cleaves her fatal way to the seat of life, and the death-blow effects the conversion which Orlando's arguments essayed in vain. The mighty warrior totters, and feels himself about to fall from his horse.

12.

He lost his power to see, his face grew pale
Like his who on near Death has fixed his eyes ;
Yet, though with spirits and with breath that fail,
He on Orlando called with words most wise,
And in low whispers : "I believe," he sighed,
"On this your God upon the cross who died."

13.

"Baptise me, Baron, in this fountain's wave
Before my speech has left me utterly ;
That if my life to sin I wilful gave,
At least in death I may not God defy.
May He who came our human race to save,
Receive my soul that owns its misery :
My sins are many, I with sorrow own,
But very great the mercy He has shown."—B. i. c. 19.

Tears of contrition prove the sincerity of this appeal, while the mourner's eyes are steadfastly fixed on heaven. But resigning to his

conqueror "the best steed that ever knight bestrode," the dying man bids Orlando make haste with his charitable work.

15.

"Lift me from out the saddle, valiant peer !
For I no longer can upraise my head.
Oh do not leave my soul to perish here !
At once baptise me, who e'en now am dead !

Thou too wilt grieve and be of evil cheer,
 If thus from earth thou lettest me be sped."
 This said he, and yet many words beside.
 Oh how the Count felt sad and grieved that tide !

16.

Hot tears were running over all his face,
 As to the earth he sprang from saddle-bow ;
 He clasped the wounded king in kind embrace,
 And on the fountain's marble-brink laid low :
 Weeping insatiate still he begged for grace
 And pardon with soft accents, from his foe.
 Then he baptised him in the fountain's wave,
 God praying, with clasped hands, his soul to save,

17.

A brief while passed, and then he found him cold,
 In face and all his body deadly chill ;
 And saw thereby that life had loosed her hold.
 He left him lying by the fountain-rill,
 All armed as best beseemed a warrior bold,
 With sword in hand and crown on helmet still.¹

The adventures which follow seem poor after this fine scene. We will pass over them, and return with Orlando to Albracca, where he finds Angelica once more exposed to the greatest danger ; since her redoubtable ally Marphisa has turned against her. So when Orlando makes his way back to her, she receives him with the utmost show of love, regales him richly, and promises him her hand as the reward of the exploits he is to perform for her.

Intoxicated by love, Orlando does not hesitate to defy his own friend and cousin Rinaldo, who, unknown to Angelica, is fighting in Marphisa's ranks. One day cannot decide the battle of two such champions. It is adjourned to the next. Meantime, however, Angelica learns the name of the hero whom, for her sake, Orlando is seeking to kill, and discovers in Rinaldo the object of her own unrequited passion. She insists on leaving her castle and being herself a spectator of the combat.

It is turning unfavourably to Rinaldo ; so the lady whose love he has slighted resolves to save him, even at the risk of almost certain death to the man who loves her so faithfully. She calls Orlando to her just as he has delivered an all but fatal stroke, tells him that she wishes to put his love to one more test before giving it the final recompense, and bids him at once ride off and destroy the garden of the great enchantress Falerina, and deliver her captives from her devouring dragon—the jaws of which Angelica herself only escaped by virtue of her magic ring during her recent wanderings. The obedient knight asks no questions, raises no difficulties. The thought of receiving Angelica for his bride overpowers all scruples, and even blinds him to the dishonour of leaving an adversary unvanquished. He sets off at once. A transient pang of remorse visits the mind of Angelica. She feels ashamed for a moment of sacrificing so devoted a lover to the insensible Rinaldo ;

¹ To these touching stanzas Tasso has been indebted for some suggestions for his "Death of Clorinda." He can well afford to acknowledge the obligation.

but she excuses herself as a passive Love. Her words are :—
agent in the hand of the tyrant

40.

Orlando never will return again ;
For nought can help him, either strength or skill,
In that right perilous road that he has ta'en,
On which I sent him. King of Heaven ! how ill
I did, despatching from me to be slain
A man so mighty, at my cruel will !
But yet God knows I could not bear the sight
Of death o'ertaking mine own well-loved knight.

41.

Therefore great Brava's Count must shortly die,
Only the son of Aymon's life to save.
Much more than life *this* loved me tenderly ;
That no compassion gives me, or e'er gave.
I needs must hear my conscience' chiding cry,
See how in this I right to wrong enslave ;
But yet the fault is Love's, who breaks all law
His subjects where him pleases on to draw.

—B. i. c. 28.

But of such perfidy on his lady's part Orlando has not the faintest suspicion. He rides onward, pursuing his perilous quest, warmed by memories of the sunny glances with which he was sent forth ; and when tempted by the treachery of a lady whom he falls in with to speak ill of women, he smites his own mouth for having done so, and bids himself remember that for the goodness of Angelica alone all other women are worthy to be had in esteem.

The debt the sex owe to one who so honours them is partly paid by a mystic maiden, who suddenly presents herself to explain to the knight the course he must take to encounter the dangers of Falerina's garden. After describing them, she tells him how the enchantress even now is preparing for his reception. Having foreseen through her art the coming of a Western knight named Orlando to destroy her power, she is labouring to temper a blade which can cut through even his flesh, made invulnerable by magic.

Having fully learned the risks

to which he is about to expose himself, the dauntless knight sets off, albeit swordless and horseless ; for in divers adventures on the road, he has suffered the temporary loss of both Durindana and Brigliadoro. The garden is surrounded by a wall of solid rock towering up to heaven, and thirty miles in circumference. Unlike Dragontina, its mistress does not stupefy her guests, but slays them ; for at its eastern gate there hisses the dreadful dragon which has already devoured so many brave men and fair maidens. Orlando slays this cruel warder ; and no sooner is it dead, than the gate disappears and he finds himself a prisoner within the garden. Its loveliness is great enough almost to reconcile him to such imprisonment, and for a while the Paladin stands amazed at its delights. It is May-time, and the scents of the flowers which adorn lawn and hill-ock, grove and valley, are enough of themselves to rejoice the heart. So are the songs of the birds, and the gambols of hare and cony, roe and fallow deer, which sport fearlessly around. But ere long, as he

follows the guidance of the winding river, the knight sees gleaming, amid distant trees, the enamelled plates of gold that case the walls of Falerina's palace; and, drawing nearer, espies the emeralds and balass-rubies that blaze upon its portals. Finding them open, Orlando enters, and beholds within them the gold-crowned and white-robed lady of the mansion. She has just completed her task. Balisarda, the sword which no enchantments can resist, is flashing in her hand, and from its polished steel her fair face is reflected. It is in vain that Falerina strives to flee. The invader snatches the sword from her hand, and grasping her hair, threatens her with a cruel death unless she will show him how to leave the garden. The enchantress trembles from head to foot with fear; nevertheless she locks her lips and obstinately refuses to speak, either at the call of flattery or menace. Then her captor, loath as he is to hurt a woman, remembering her evil deeds and the prisoners whom she flung to the dragon, binds her fast to a tree, and for the last time bids her say where the gates are. Silent still, the sorceress only smiles with wicked delight at the Paladin's perplexity. But—in happy hour for his own renown as the reverencer of every type of womanhood—Orlando suddenly recollects the book which the stranger-maiden gave him describing the garden's intricacies, and opens it that he may learn what Falerina has refused to tell him.

Directed by it, he approaches a lake haunted by a dangerous Siren, with his helmet stuffed full of roses, so that he cannot hear the song whose sweet strains make the birds flock round and listen to them with closed eyes and folded wings. Feigning to undergo the

same influence, the knight lies down on the bank and pretends to be asleep. The Siren, rushing on him as an easy prey, is forthwith slain; and then Orlando, as the book bids him, smears his armour with her blood. So, and so only, can he safely advance to meet the terrible warder of the southern gate,—a bull with one horn of iron and one of a flame, which no coat of mail could resist without such protection. Even thus the combat is a fierce one; but at its end, the slain bull sinks into the earth, the bronze gate whence he issued vanishing, to leave the blank high wall in its place. Similar to this is the result of the Count's fight with the defender of the jewelled western gate—only reached after a successful combat with a monstrous Harpy. There is now only one possible exit left, that by the northern gate; and of it the book gives no hopeful report, since the guardian of its silver portals is a giant whose blood, if he is slain, will give birth to two more, and so on in steady increasing arithmetical progression. Orlando, when, having killed the first, he sees the two predicted successors arise, perceives how futile it would be to use his sword upon them; and—but not without incredible labour—succeeds at last in binding both without shedding their blood. This breaks the spell. Falerina is vanquished, and the gate stands open for the Paladin's departure.

But he will not go forth without completely destroying the enchantments to which so many have fallen victims. And these—so he learns from the book—depend on the highest bough of the midmost tree in the garden, and will cease when it is broken. But the tree, immensely high, and so slender that it can be shaken by the lightest footfall, is laden with a perilous

wealth of golden fruits, which, rained down from such a height, are sure to slay any one who dares to approach it. The undaunted Orlando, however, contrives for himself a protecting screen of woven beechen boughs covered with sods. Sheltered by this, he gets safe to the foot of the tree; although even his vast strength can hardly bear up against the crushing weight of the golden apples that load his movable pent-house. But once there, Falerina's sword, tempered to destroy all enchantments, severs the tree's stem with one mighty stroke; the fateful twig on its summit is broken by its fall, and thereupon the earth shakes, the sky grows dark, and a burning flame enveloped in thick smoke rages for a while around. Then it passes away; and on its departure the beauteous palace and garden, with their lofty enclosing wall, are seen no more. Nothing is left but Falerina herself and the tree to which she was bound. Silent no longer, she now weeps bitterly for the destruction of her works, and implores Orlando at least to spare her life; as an inducement to which, she offers him the release of her surviving prisoners. But, says Bojardo, no such offer was needed, since neither insult nor injury would ever have led Orlando to kill a woman.¹

Even Falerina's cold heart is touched by her captor's mercy; and when on their journey he stands face to face with a yet greater peril than those to which she exposed him, instead of wishing to destroy him, she exhorts him to

flee from it. He has made Morgana, the mightiest of fays, his enemy—forasmuch as he, and he only amongst men, has thrice sounded her magic horn with impunity, and has yet despised and cast from him her gifts. To punish him, she has enchanted a lake above her own marvellous subterranean dwelling-place, and set on the drawbridge which crosses its narrowest part a giant whom her spells have gifted with strength which is always six times as great as that of his opponent for the time being. While here awaiting Orlando, this formidable champion has already taken Rinaldo and many good knights captive. Melted by the generosity with which she has been treated, Falerina, after partly expounding his danger to the Count, points to the bridge, and says: "Fly, Sir Knight, from a risk which not even the great Orlando, or Charlemain and all his Court, could safely encounter. Much should I grieve to lose my own life; but yet more would your death grieve me, brave and gentle cavalier as you are, whereas I am but a weak and despised woman." This appeal makes Orlando hesitate. He wants to return to lay his trophies at the feet of Angelica. Why endanger a life that belongs to her, in a conflict for which there is no occasion? But presently his mood changes. He sees Rinaldo's armour hanging on a tree. So valiant a man could, he thinks, never have been taken alive; and so he feels irresistibly impelled to avenge his friend and cousin's death,—the more so as, when they last parted, it was, for

¹ Readers of Calderon will remember how he uses Falerina and her enchantments as the symbol of the sorceries of sin. That Orlando's victory over her has any ethical meaning in Bojardo's pages, it would be hard to prove. More of allegoric teaching may be discerned in his dealings with Morgana, the genius of covetousness, and impersonation of Opportunity.

Angelica's sake, in anger. "Who," all barons, who has bereaved me of he exclaims with tears, "has done thee?"—
me this great wrong? Flower of

51.

Thou hast through traitorous device been slain
Upon this bridge by that false villain base;
For not the world could victory o'er thee gain,
If it had met and fought thee face to face.
Hear now thy Count, my cousin, from the plain
Of Paradise, henceforth thy dwelling-place—
Hear me, whom thou didst love so, though a wrong
I did thee, borne away by passion strong.

52.

Pardon I ask; to me forgiveness give,
If e'er I sinned against thee, brother dear!
Thine ever was I, as now thine I live,
Although vain love, and false suspicious fear,
Had force to bid us in fierce combat strive,
While jealous spite our hands made sharp swords rear.
Yet thee I ever loved, and love thee now;
I wronged thee, and that wrong I here avow.

53.

What treacherous wolf, ravening around his den,
Has now forbidden us return to make
Unto sweet concord and sweet peace again,
Sweet kisses and sweet tears fresh love that wake?
O bitter grief, that I nor now nor then,
Nor anywhere shall counsel with thee take,
And ere I die to thee for pardon sue:
This pains my breast—'tis this my soul must rue.

—B. ii. c. 7.

This tempest of sorrow is quickly followed by the thunderbolt of Orlando's wrath, and he rushes on Aridano, the gigantic guardian of the bridge. But even Balisarda, Falerina's sword, can only inflict a slight wound on one made resistless by the spells of the mightier Morgana. He grasps the Paladin with sixfold strength, and bears him through the waters of the lake to the enchanted land which lies a mile beneath its surface, lighted by sunbeams reflected in some mysterious way through the waters, and walled in by shining marble. Here the giant unlooses his hold, and prepares to despoil Orlando, as he had all his other captives, of his armour. But the Count is not to be so dealt with. To Aridano's vast

surprise he at once assaults him, and, by skill and by the advantage which his marvellous weapon gives him, succeeds in killing the adversary,—in whose hands Falerina, fleeing away in desperate terror, had left him wholly for lost.

Standing victorious where so many have fallen, Orlando goes through a sculptured door in the marble wall, and after threading a dark passage three miles long, sees glimmering at its end a light cast by a resplendent jewel, which increases in brilliancy as he advances. When he at last comes out, he sees a river flowing through a plain more thickly strewn with gems and pearls than are the fields in spring with flowers. This is Morgana's treasure, and the knight

swims the stream to reach it—since the iron bridge that crosses the water falls into it by magic as often as an intruding foot approaches. In this abode of wealth Orlando stands amid golden images, enchanted to wear a semblance of life. There sits among his court a king, as they are, of gold, studded over with pearls, rubies, and diamonds. But above his head hangs a menacing sword, while the moral is pointed by these words on a scroll held by a neighbouring figure: "State, wealth, and all this world can give, are vain, when their price is so much fear; gained and kept subject to this risk, what profit is there in power or pleasure?"

The carbuncle which illuminates the whole scene forms the "restless heart" of a golden lily on the table which stands before the motionless and silent king. Orlando seeks to grasp it, that it may light up for him the darkness

beyond. But each time that he puts forth his hand to take it, it is extinguished by an arrow shot by a golden archer opposite. All is gloom, and the confusion is rendered tenfold by an earthquake that shakes the whole cavern. When this has happened twice, Orlando contrives to receive the third arrow on his shield, grasps the bright jewel, and threads the dark labyrinth beyond by its light. At the foot of a mile of perilous stair is a gate in the black rock, the inscription above which warns Orlando that to enter is easy, but to go forth again is hard, except to him who shall have succeeded in grasping the good fay, who flies so lightly over mount and plain, by the forelock. Through this gloomy door the knight descends into a garden, which, though subterranean, is through magic bright and beautiful as those of the fays of upper earth.

41.

Here shone with splendour so serene the sky
That fair as it is no clear sapphire's blue;
The mead was full of trees whose greenery
Gave fruit and blossom both at once to view;
A mile beyond the gate a wall stood high,
To make a parting of the plain in two—
Built of such precious and transparent stone,
That the fair garden was beyond it shown.

42.

Orlando from the gate pursued his way,
And, as he walked along the turf, espied
A watery fountain on his right hand plain,
By gold, and pearls, and jewels beautified.
'Twas there extended fair Morgana lay
Asleep, with upturned face, its wave beside;
A look so sweet and beautiful she had,
That mourners could her very sight make glad.

—B. ii. c. 8.

While the knight stands gazing on her loveliness, a voice bids him grasp her without delay—since those light fluttering garments, and those curls which cluster on Morgana's forehead only, elude the hold of all pursuers. The speaker

is Dudon, a captive along with Brandimarte, Rinaldo, and many others, beyond the glittering wall; and, Orlando's attention once attracted to them, his joy at finding Rinaldo alive after all, and his anxiety to learn their strange ad-

ventures, prevent his following the sage advice which he has received. When at last he awakens to the fact that none but Morgana can open their prison-door, it is too

late. The fay has risen from her slumber, and the forelock which he ought to have seized is no longer within his reach.

57.

The Count, who greatly longed within to be,
Unto the fountain speeded back amain.
Morgana there he found, who danced with glee
Round it, and, dancing, sang her merry strain.
Nor from the wind can leaf more swiftly flee
Than she went, circling round and round again;
Now looking towards the sun, and now the ground,
The while these words in her sweet song resound :

58.

"Whoso in this world treasure seeks to hold,
Or pleasure, or seeks honour and high place,
Let him without delay this lock of gold
Grasp on my brow, made happy through my grace.
But, with such work to do, let none make bold
To idle, since time speeds with forward pace—
Once passed, it never will return ; and lo !
My back I turn and leave him to his woe."

59.

So sang, the while she traced her mazy ring,
The beauteous Fairy round that clear cold fount ;
But when Orlando came she ceased to sing,
And quickly turned away from him her front.
The fountain and the mead abandoning,
She straightway fled, and flying sought a mount
That closed the little valley in from view,—
Thither Morgana to escape him flew."—B. ii. c. 8.

Orlando pursues, but his pursuit is for some time in vain. Up the mountain-side, through rock and thicket, amid thorns and stones, blown back by whirlwinds, battered by hail, amid the roar of the thunder and the flash of the lightning, he can hardly catch a glimpse of the fay's retreating form.

Impressed by his difficulties, the poet pauses a moment to moralise, and bids courtiers learn never to let a chance slip, by the example of him who, having neglected to grasp Morgana's forelock as she slept in the flowers by the fountain, now vainly chases her across the desert.

But Orlando is of the number of those who are born to command Fortune. In spite of rushing torrents and falling trees, notwith-

standing that his only escort is the grisly form of Penitence, which lashes him for his neglect, the knight continues to follow the flying shape of Morgana. Many a time he lays his hand on her, but to no purpose ; for it either slips back from her yielding garments, or touches the smooth back of her head in vain. But at last the audacious fay turns for a moment to look at her baffled foe, and Orlando clutches the forelock which has so long eluded his grasp. No sooner has he seized it than the whole scene changes. The storm ceases, the sky clears, the rugged mountain becomes a plain, and the thorns are replaced by verdure and flowers. Penitence retreats, with a parting word of warning, to her

dismal cave. And now Morgana yields up her silver key to the knight; but warns him to beware lest, turning it unskilfully, he break the lock of the prison-door. The Count well knows "how few are to be found beneath the moon who can use the key of Fortune aright;" and so he takes the precaution to hold Morgana fast by her golden tress, and leads her with him to release her captives. They come forth joyfully, after thanking God with clasped hands. They pass through the rich treasure-house, whose wealth none save Rinaldo dares to touch; and he does so vainly, for the outer door refuses to let him out until he has

dropped his spoil. When they have come forth, and, having mounted the difficult stair which winds upwards for three miles through the living rock, have recovered their lost armour from the cypress-trees on which their captor had displayed it, they are reminded by Dudon of the peril which France is in through the invasion of Agramante, the Moorish king, and bidden, now they are at liberty, to hasten to defend it. All acknowledge the obligation, and prepare to fulfil it; but their deliverer, Orlando, on whom it is more imperative than on any one, is rendered by Love insensible to the call of duty:—

47.

His duty and his honour pressed him sore
To hasten in that realm's defence to fight;
So much the more as he was Senator,
And champion of the Church, of Rome the light.
But Love, who conquers all men evermore,
Had stirred his soul with such fierce passion's might,
That vile to him seemed all things, as leaves dead,
Set by Angelica's bright golden head.—B. ii. c. 9.

Accordingly, he once more seeks Albracca; whence Angelica—impelled by her as yet unextinguished love for Rinaldo—deludes him into escorting her back to Europe. There King Charles, alarmed at his two favourite Paladins' rivalry, places her out of the reach of both, and offers her hand as the reward of whichever of the two shall do best in his

approaching battle with the Saracen invader.

It is at the close of that lost battle that Ariosto takes up the main thread of Bojardo's narrative—snapt short by the French invasion of Italy. His third book opened with better auguries; but they were not destined to be fulfilled. There was a delusive calm before the coming storm, when Bojardo wrote—

1.

E'en as 'tis sweeter unto sailors' eyes,
Whom tempest fierce has smitten with despair,
To see smooth seas with waves that gently rise,
The sky by stars adorned, serene the air;
E'en as the pilgrim full of gladness spies
The new day dawning over champaign fair,
When he has come to safety and to light
Through rugged mountain-pass and shades of night;—

2.

So, now that the infernal tempest-roar
Of pitiless war dies from our ears away;
Now that the world can joyful feast once more,
And that with flower on flower this Court looks gay,—

I with more gladness can unfold the lore
 So beauteous, woven by me in by-past day.
 Come courteous then, and hear me read its page,
 Ye lords and ladies, and fair baronage.

3.

The battles and triumphal honours high
 Of Charles, of France the king, shall I narrate;
 What Count Orlando wrought right valiantly
 Through love, with puissance most exceeding great, &c.

—B. iii. c. 1.

But after proceeding through eight cantos he breaks off in the middle of the ninth with the exclamation, "O God our Redeemer, while I sing I see these Gauls putting all Italy into flames!" and, as has been already said, death prevented him from resuming his tale in quieter times, and narrating the great exploits by which Orlando was to have wiped off the stain of his temporary desertion of the standard of the Cross. Had he lived longer, how would Orlando have fared at his hands? Would Bojardo have at last rewarded his chivalrous devotion, his respectful love for Angelica, by melting her hard heart towards him, after the mystic fount of Ardennes had freed it from its foolish passion for Rinaldo?

None can tell. As it is, Orlando's tale is truly as one of Max Müller's solar myths, wherein the roseate dawn vision is chased fruitlessly by the sun-hero through one baffling cloud after another, and lost at last in the mists that gather round the sunset.

Those who list may read in Ariosto how his fatal passion for the deceitful Angelica never left him till it had bereft him of his reason; of the miracle by which that reason was restored to him; and of how, after for the peace of Christendom that enchantress had finally forsaken Europe, Orlando became again the faithful and fearless knight that he had been of old.

Bojardo's portraiture of him is at

times drawn with wavering lines; some of the adventures in which he engages him are discordant with his pure and noble character. But, allowing for slips and inconsistencies which he might have rectified had he lived to give his work a final revision, we may say that in the main his Orlando presents to us a fine ideal of knightly courtesy and generosity, of respectful reverence for womanhood, and of devoted and self-sacrificing love. The idol at whose shrine the libation of his affections is poured forth in all their freshness and in all their fervour is, unhappily, a very unworthy one; yet, mischievous and heartless as she is, who can read Bojardo's descriptions of his "blonde Angelica," and not sympathise with and partly excuse the bewilderment of the noble heart with which she sported so recklessly,—given as it was to the fairest of all living women—to that goodliest casket which few could believe contained only such a grievously flawed diamond?

The foregoing brief abstract of Orlando's principal adventures will give the reader some idea of Bojardo's finest scenes—such as Agrican's baptism in the hour of death—and of the main outline of his story. What it conveys but little notion of is the way in which Orlando's tale is crossed and recrossed by the stories of others whose fortunes are more or less intimately connected with his own; so that for whole cantos the reader's

attention is occupied by adventures with which the principal hero of the song has little or nothing to do, and which in their turn are abruptly left unfinished in order to resume his. The opening up this straight and smooth road through the wild brakes and tangles of Bojardo's forest-thickets may have here and there injured their designed effect. For instance, there is an unavoidable resemblance in Orlando's dealings with the three fays, Dragontina, Falerina, and Morgana—diverse as are the things that befall him with each of them—which may weary the reader of this sketch in a way in which they would not have tried his patience had they been presented to him with the relief of Bojardo's own innumerable digressions. Orlando, too, stands alone in this brief abstract of his story; in Bojardo's poem the eye can better measure the full height of his stature when it sees him towering above the other Paladins, notably above the

well-contrasted form of Rinaldo, the Diomed of the 'Orlando Innamorato,' and marks how, as with the Achilles of Homer, the presence of no other champion, however brave, is, like Orlando's, the certain presage of victory.

We can only say to those justly dissatisfied on these or other accounts with our story of Orlando, Read for yourselves—always the best plan when practicable. While to those who—for want of leisure or inclination to force their own way through brambles and thick underwood—love direct paths from glade to glade, and do not object to our guidance, we willingly offer an invitation to accompany us before long on another similar excursion. May they find reason to think, in spite of all defects on the part of his English interpreter, that Bojardo's modest aspiration—to prove one of the poets who give true delight—was not unfulfilled. He opens the nineteenth canto of his second book with these words:—

1.

Once was I of a morning-tide in May,
In mead where beauteous flowers their garlands wove,
Upon a hill beside a tranquil bay,
On whose whole face the tremulous sparkles strove :
There, 'mid the roses in green thicket lay
A damsel singing clear her song of love,
Opening her lips so sweetly at each word,
That by their pleasure yet my heart is stirred.

2.

My heart is stirred, and I to mind recall
That great delight I took from listening,
And think, Could I my hearers so enthrall
As did her song, and equal gladness bring,
I straight my lays would proffer to you all,
Nor wait, as now I do, till prayed to sing;
For, knowing of my worth the scanty measure,
Silence, not songs, full oft would be my pleasure.

Yet, in spite of their singer's humble estimate, those songs can at times stir the listener's heart as with a trumpet-call, at others with the pompous music that heralds

some gorgeous procession, at others with the sweet notes on which the shepherd pipes his accompaniment to an artless lay of love.

CHANCE CONTINENTAL ACQUAINTANCES.

TRAVELLING in company is all very well for bachelors barely come to years of discretion and innocent of the ways of the world. They are shy with strangers, are seldom at home in foreign tongues, and consequently they are inclined to cling together in a sense of mutual dependence which cements their friendship. Should they differ over-night, they make it up in the morning, and are better friends than before. But if a man have attained maturity, still more, should he be going steadily down the hill, he is far happier alone, if he know something of the world and the Continent. The rare intimacies he has preserved are infinitely too precious to be lightly risked on the chances of frequent conflicts of opinion. Any of his cronies whose intimacy he values, is very certain to have a decided will of his own; and the one who is worsted in any argument over plans or arrangements, will have his revenge sooner or later—may probably sulk in the meantime. If the pair are wise, they will part company promptly, confessing that they had better never have started together.

Of course there is no rule without exception, nor are we speaking of those exceptionally sweet-tempered companions of whom we can recall one solitary example, whose sportive humour was well known to, and loved by Maga's readers. He is gone, alas! upon a longer journey; and perhaps an irreparable loss may have made us more fastidious and exacting. We may take it for granted that any bachelor well past middle age has gradually become wedded to his own ways; his juniors would call him capricious or "cranky," if not actually eccentric. All the

same he has still a keen enjoyment of life, and seeks the very salt of life in congenial society. Because he "sports his oak" through the morning in his snug rooms in St James's, there is no reason why he should not go the round of his clubs in the afternoon, and welcome agreeable dinner engagements for the evening. On the contrary, after solitary communion with himself or with his books, he comes forth all the fresher and the more sparkling, and does his duty to society by showing himself to society at his best. So the solitary traveller of a certain age, with some shrewd experience and social gifts, may positively be a social benefactor. Few people will confess, even to themselves, how wearisome they have found family travelling. There are not many of us who, like Dr Johnson, find it difficult to travel over their own minds, or the minds with which they are perpetually in contact. Pick out any family party at a *table d'hôte*—the father, the mother, the two rosy-cheeked daughters, and the hobbledehoy from the public school. They seldom open their mouths, from the soup to the sponge-biscuits, except to stow away solids, sweets, and German sours, or to sip from the family bottle, too liberally diluted with water. Or keep your eyes on the Damon and Pythias who are bound for the Alps or the Dolomites, and seated opposite. Damon may be as brazen-browed a young barrister as ever "heckled" a refractory witness when he chanced to hold a circuit-brief; while Pythias, previous to taking holy orders, was the glory and the "golden mouth" of his college union. But though they do sus-

tain some kind of conversation, they keep it up *sotto voce*; and though both are casting eyes at the cherry-cheeked maidens opposite, they never dream of even upsetting the salt-cellar by way of breaking the ice with an apology. As for the blushing bride and the simpering bridegroom hard by, of course they are consecrated to each other by the peculiar circumstances, and it would seem an act of ungentlemanlike profanity to intrude upon their silent raptures. It might seem so; but what we would say to you is "only try," supposing always you have a dash of grey in your whiskers, and that the faint traces of crow's-feet beneath the eyes make a *prima facie* presumption for your standing and respectability. There is always the off-chance of being snubbed; but in that case, and if you have made your approaches discreetly, you may set the bride down for a simpleton. Ten to one, whether she have come from the Shetlands, from West Galway, or from Belgravia, she is a lively and light-hearted lass, oppressed by the novelty of her position. We do not say she has had enough of the husband she has vowed to adore; far from it. Doubtless if your eyes could follow them on their retreat from the table, you would have ample evidence to the contrary. But she does begin to get bored with him in public, when the flow of soft nothings is temporarily checked, and, in the apprehension of indiscreet ears, they fall back on conventionalities or commonplaces. In passing the potatoes, you say something that draws an answer, and then in sheer civility you follow that up by remarking on the heat of the room and suggesting the opening another window. The bride brightens up, and answers

modestly. She is evidently quite willing to talk, so long as you speak simply and somewhat paternally. She would have doubtless met with more coyness the advances of Pythias, who, judging from the gorgeous colour of his necktie, is rather inclined to set himself up as a lady-killer. And when once you have made her smile, which is easy enough, the husband is pricking up his ears, not jealously but curiously. The poor man is slightly tired of *toujours perdrix*, though the partridge is sweet and tempting as bird can be. He pricks his ears to fresh talk from the outer world, and emerges from the enervating atmosphere of bliss, in the assurance that he will return to it with the zest of new enjoyment.

It may be harder work forcing the defences of the severe father and mother, who have enclosed their blooming daughters between them. Though you know nothing of the grizzly-headed gentleman with the stubbly brown beard, he may be a great man and a consequential in his native city. He may be rolling up a fortune in cotton or pig-iron, and each of these maidens may be a 50,000-pounder. "Ware hawks" is his motto; and having seldom been abroad, he suspects every man he sees of being a scamp and a fortune-hunter. But human nature is human nature. Alderman Jones misses his occupations, and his business friends, and the Cottonopolis morning mail. He gruffly acknowledges your observation on the weather, and goes the length of objurgating the heat. Touching lightly on the cathedral, which he seems much disposed to curse, you interest him with some remark on the local industries. He looks at the grey hairs and the crow's-feet, and is reassured; and in five minutes more, floundering

out of some reckless statistics, to borrow a vulgar expression, Jones and yourself are as thick as pick-pockets. Like a practical man as he is, he proceeds to pick your brains as to routes and the coinage, which have been sadly puzzling him in his unfamiliar capacity of uneducated courier. Gratefully he goes through the ceremony of something like a presentation to Mrs Jones; and the odds are, if you care for it and you play your cards diplomatically, and if the party should chance to have a private sitting-room, he requests the pleasure of your company at coffee with the family. Probably you do not care for it. Probably you prefer to make friends with Damon and Pythias, who, though they apparently have been self-contained, are really readily accessible. You adjourn with them to the smoking-room: the hours go by most agreeably; and by the time you separate, it may rest with yourself whether you do not accompany them on the day's journey on the morrow.

We hear a great deal of the *mauvaise honte* of our countrymen abroad. *Mauvaise honte* there undoubtedly is; but for the most part it is only skin-deep, and it merely needs a little confidence, with some slight tact, to penetrate it. As for foreigners, they have next to none; though some nations—and the educated French in especial—are more reserved and more distant than the English. Perhaps they have a reasonable excuse for reserve in the very promiscuous exodus of our population in the autumn. What really chills conversation, not to speak of conviviality, at *tables d'hôte*, is that same confusion of tongues which set the builders of Babel by the ears. English people, as a rule, speak no language but their own. It is

simple patriotism with a Frenchman not to know a single word of any foreign tongue. Even their professional novelists, from Victor Hugo downwards, make a point of blundering the simplest English or German phrase—firing wild shots in the air out of their inner consciousness. And the Englishman, in the apprehension of not being understood, dare not “draw” the German or the Dutchman or the Russian, who probably can talk English both grammatically and fluently. Only the other day we dropped in late to a *table d'hôte* at Interlachen. We had been tramping and travelling alone through the day, and were fasting for conversation as for food. We felt as much disposed for the one as for the other. The dinner was well advanced; the soup and fish had been served; and seldom have we sat down in a less promising company. Opposite us were a little group of Americans, with singularly handsome features, but grim and puritanically forbidding. The father, in a prehistoric costume, might have been one of the Pilgrim Fathers; the mother, in a gown of brocade and a superstructure of twisted grey hair, might have stepped down from an old family-portrait in some venerable mansion of Boston. While the daughter, though she inherited her mother's good looks, and, like Aphrodite rising from waves, was lightly attired in a sea-foam of billowy white muslin, might have been drinking verjuice for Medoc, if one might judge by the contraction of the lips that seemed made for smiling and kissing. On one side of us was somebody like a Swiss *savant*, spectacled and slovenly, who kept his head stooped over his plate, as if he were suspiciously analysing the contents, which nevertheless he

greedily swallowed. On the other side was a priest with the air of an ascetic, who austere turned away his eyes from beholding vanity in the shape of the graceful form of the fair American. The only other member of the party was a painfully shy young countryman, who kept subtly shifting himself by inches from the oppressive vicinity of the New England matron. Had we all been expecting the fall of an avalanche, the silence could not have been more appalling. Nothing short of growing desperation, with a glass or two of Beaune, could have induced one to break it. Feeling that failure would force us to feign a bleeding of the nose and beat a precipitate retreat, we "went for" that Pilgrim Father. Somewhat unceremoniously, we took his nationality for granted, and said something as to the latest telegrams about General Grant, who at that moment was lying between life and death. The Pilgrim Father, who proved an uncommonly good fellow, had known the President well, and appreciated foreign sympathy. He had known Lincoln too, and Lowell, and ever so many more, — statesmen and soldiers, literary men and leviathan speculators. He could talk eloquently, as most of his countrymen can "orate," and yet he could listen and edify, and had the patience to answer questions. The Swiss *savant* wakened up and cut into the conversation: as it turned out, he had given lectures and lessons in Chicago and Philadelphia; he knew the American continent well—from the Lakes to the Hudson; while he had an extensive acquaintance with European literature. The French priest had been detailed on mission duty to Quebec, and had walked his way with only Indian companions through great

part of Acadia and the picturesque highlands of New York State. The conversation grew more and more animated: the waiters cleared away the dessert, and nobody paid any attention, till at last the *savant* called for coffee, and asked permission to light a cigar. The humble individual who had struck the spark, relapsed into the rôle of listener; for even the modest young Englishman, forgetting self-consciousness in lively interest, contributed to throw fuel on the flames by asking intelligent questions. And when the tobacco-smoke began to thicken, we all adjourned to the garden, taking leave of each other like much-valued friends when the ladies made a move to the *casino*.

When you go abroad unattached, with the idea of picking up casual acquaintances, much will depend on the choice of routes. You are hardly likely to make friends if you pass by Paris—at least till you have left the French frontiers behind. Even if the sea be calm in crossing the Channel, there are few and brief opportunities for advances; while in stormy weather, though personally proof against sea-sickness, you will scarcely care to play the good Samaritan, on the chance of meeting the victim again in happier circumstances. Nor are you greatly tempted; for woman never looks less attractive than when the salt sea-spray and the long sickening ground-swell are blanching her cheeks and loosening her love-locks. While in the first-class Parisian hotels there can be no sort of sociability, since they are chiefly used as sleeping-quarters. The guests go abroad for their meals, or are served in private sitting-rooms. We should rather recommend the Antwerp or the Queensborough and Flushing routes, which take one straight

to Cologne, the starting-point of the tourist country. Going to Flushing, there are undoubtedly drawbacks, but they may be turned to excellent account. We are shot out of the steamer in the early morning, when there is neither time nor inclination to swallow more than a cup of tea. But the air from the Scheldt and the winding channels among the islands, although damp, is fresh; and after an hour or two among the dykes, the Dutch lagoons, and the sea-arms, appetite loses patience, and begins to become clamorous. Call as we will, the only answer from the maidens in the station refreshment-rooms is in the shape of Dutch cheese, flat beer, and schiedam. The delicately nurtured British female can hardly break her fast on such literally raw materials. It is a case of the wise and the foolish virgins. Ladies who seldom leave home in England without stores of sandwiches and sweet-cakes in their travelling-bags, have started now absolutely unprovided. They have cast themselves adrift, as on one of the rafts of the "Medusa." While you, as a veteran traveller who has previously suffered, for once in a way have packed a basket at the club with claret, cold chicken, and the necessary condiments. Prudently, and in the prevision of what might possibly happen, you have laid in ample supplies, and prepared yourself for the practice of hospitality. On the opposite side of the carriage sits a gentleman, apparently in attendance on a sister and a cousin. The ladies, who have hitherto seemed somewhat unapproachable, begin obviously to be a-hungered. Indeed they say as much, and their *cavalier servante* plunges out at Middelburg in search of something to supply their needs. Needless to say, he comes back

empty-handed, or with a slice of the aforesaid Dutch cheese and a wedge of gritty and indigestible brown bread. The girls turn up their pretty noses, and one of them, in an outbreak of pettishness, pitches the untempting viands out of the window. You smile sardonically to yourself, but say nothing in the meantime. The amateur courier is sent to make a similar attempt at Rosendaal, with no better success; though this time he is roundly abused below the breath for coming back empty-handed. Hunger is taming the impracticable beauties; they are inclined to descant upon their woes and seek sympathy from the stranger. Already, as a three-hours' travelling acquaintance, they were regarding him compassionately as a companion in misfortune. That is the moment for Mephistopheles to play his trumps. You bring down the basket from the net overhead; you spread a snowy napkin on the cushion beside you. You lay out the rosy-coloured roast-chicken, delicately cut up; you flank it with appetising slices of French roll, and show a tiny *pâté de foie gras*. There are salt and mustard in neat ivory cruets; the sliding silver cup comes out of the morocco case, and there is a long flask of St Estophe or St Emilien. You are leisurely going to work, when a sudden idea seems to strike you. Considering the famine-stricken eyes that have been watching your proceedings, the idea might have occurred to you not unnaturally. "Possibly the ladies may not have breakfasted. I need hardly say I should be only too happy," &c. &c.

And are not the ladies happy too? Only ask those eyes of theirs, whatever the lips may say. Talk of that parable of the Good Samaritan, or of the story of St

Martin sharing his cloak with the beggar. One such present and practical illustration is worth any amount of Biblical or legendary study. Regardless of the slight apology, only muttered for form's sake, in another minute you are doing the honours of the *déjeuner* to your fair friends; and they are bound to you body and soul for the journey and all future occasions. The hours fly by, which is more than the train does; and you drive to the Hôtel du Nord at Cologne, still independent and unattached, but with a pleasant party at your disposition.

We know most of the good hotels in Europe fairly well, and we should say that Hôtel du Nord at Cologne is the most entertaining and instructive of all caravansaries. A caravansary it is, where great routes converge from all directions—where the tourist, for the most part, merely perches and passes on. But it is comfortably and even luxuriously kept, considering the incessant bustle and scramble; and there are archaeological and romantic attractions in the city of the Three Kings which invite the æsthetic and the artist to linger. So the ruck of the tourists rush forward and disappear; while the best of them take up a temporary residence while they are making acquaintance with the venerable Meister Wilhelm or Meister Stephen, and doing the churches from the cathedral downwards. So the *table d'hôte* is the queerest conglomeration in Europe of all sorts and conditions of men. Taking your place where it pleases the seneschal or head-waiter to dictate, you put in for a lottery. You may be in luck as to your neighbours, or you may be in evil vein; but in any case, it is very sure you will have ample matter for observation and speculation. You see the

usual proportion of honest English folk, very much abroad indeed, and transparently simple in their characters. You see invalids with affectionate companions, bound for the German baths; and Israelites with hooked noses and thick lips, who have evidently broken loose from the Berlin Bourse for a holiday, and are celebrating the pass-over to England, as they combine business and pleasure, with copious libations of champagne or sparkling Rhenish. You see Germans of substance, feeding greedily for their money—the meal being served at so many marks—but reversing the immortal practice of Falstaff, by sipping a minimum of acid Rhine wine to excessive quantities of solid food. While, if you address yourself to your *convives*, on the strength of delusive signs of nationality, you are liable to fall into strange mistakes.

There are many Frenchmen like the illustrious Victor Hugo, who talk of Paris as the centre of the habitable globe; as the brilliant pole-star of the world's illumination; as the mother of progress and of thought. It may be so, though we see reason to doubt it; and we often fancy that too patriotic Frenchmen confound sunshine with comets, and planets with shooting-stars. But we are sure that if imitation in things more material be the sincerest flattery, England has her share of Continental compliments. Hungarians, Austrians, and Russians, Italians and Dutchmen, and even occasionally Germans when they have cut their hair and cast the slovenly slough of their universities, patronise the sartorian art of the severer English school, and affect English scarves and collars. It is long since you might have taken it to be a matter of course that the cosmopolitan fash-

ionables who run race-horses at Vienna or Baden, or go in for the *tirs à pigeon* at Baden or Monte Carlo, have ordered their clothes from Saville Row, and their hats from Piccadilly or New Bond Street. But of late years that fashion has been spreading and going lower in the social scale. A few weeks ago, for example, we made a double mistake at the Nord. Coming in late, we were seated next a gentleman who looked correct and austere old English all over. We meant to "draw him" at leisure, though we feared there need be no great hurry. His character might be morally unimpeachable, but we misdoubted his social gifts. When we did venture upon him, he proved to be a Dutch Government official, with about a dozen words of broken English at command, but voluble in both German and French, and a thoroughly good fellow. That say-nothing-to-nobody manner of his had been put on with his English attire: it was merely an admirably natural exaggeration of the British *morgue* with which we are credited in the Rue Rivoli caricatures, and at the *cafés chantants* of the Champs Élysées. Almost opposite, on the other side of the table, were a couple of young university freshmen, of sporting proclivities,—so they seemed, at least. There could surely be no mistaking the shooting-coats, the cream-coloured scarves, and the horse-shoe breast-pins? They blushed ingenuously, and were so painfully ill at ease that one was inclined to address and encourage them in common charity. While we were procrastinating and discoursing with our Dutch neighbour, they had summoned courage to call for a bottle of Marcobrunner. Evidently they understood their complaint and its treatment. They clinked glasses ceremoniously with tremulous fin-

gers, and drank; they filled and they drank again. Their tongues were loosened: they launched out in the talk of the Fatherland; and there they were, a couple of as boisterous and bumptious young Bonn students as ever woke the echoes of the Popplesdorf Avenue with their wild night-catches!

Yes, there is much of the *comédie humaine* to be seen at Cologne,—if you care nothing for the quaint Romanesque of the churches—for the imaginative realism of the early artists, who rang the changes of the most fantastic conceptions in their fiends, if they stereotyped simpering smiles on the faces of their angels—or for the relics of the sanctified virgin martyrs that grimly panel chancel and transepts in St Ursula's shrine. But seeing the human comedy in the most bustling of hotels must always be very much matter of chance. You may drop into a vein of ill luck, where there is little but the conventional or the commonplace: you may be hustled into the corners of an overcrowded pit and catch nothing but flying glimpses at a dim phantasmagoria of figures. If you care to loll comfortably—metaphorically speaking—in a quiet stage-box, you had best take your travelling ticket by a river steamer. And the Rhine from Cologne to Mayence, or *vice versa*, is still the grand highroad of tourists. There was a time, before the introduction of railways, when every one was bound to travel by boat. The river is pleasanter now for purposes of quiet contemplation, than before the railways had thinned and weeded the rush. Now, as a rule, the mob hurries forward by trains that give comparatively speedy despatch. But more intelligent and impressionable people prefer the express boats,

which, touching only at Bonn, Coblenz, &c., leave leisurely opportunities for enjoying the river scenery. You may miss, of course, the very exceptional few who love to linger on the beauties of Ohilde Harold's "exulting and abounding river," who loiter along the banks, dream among the shattered ruins, and explore the charms of ivy-covered cloisters religiously sequestered in the side valleys. You may miss the *élite*, but that cannot be helped: and after all, you enjoy the company of a tolerably select residuum. Then the old traveller who has long been familiar with the Rhine, who has steeped his senses in its associations, in its traditions, and its manners, has many an opportunity. He has drunk the *maitrank* on the Drachenfels in May, months before the advent of the harbingers of the earliest summer-flight of the tourists; he has picnicked under the arches of Heisterbach—the magpie brook—with learned friends and their excellent housewives from Bonn University; he has stepped out over the heights of Ehrenbreitstein from Coblenz to stake his florins on the green tables at Ems; he has cast his flies in the Lahn, consecrated to anglers by Sir Humphry Davy; he has broken his fast at mid-day in many an upland village, where the water, springing from its limpid source beneath the massive stone fountain, rushes down the steep single street between barns and haystacks, under the blazing sunbeams that are deflected by the broad overhanging farm-eaves. The scent of those old days is in his nostrils—of the crumbling mortar and the dank nettles in the dark castle court—of the rich hay that has been won, without a shower, from the hanging meadows on the spring-lighted hillsides. The

inspiration of memory fires his fancy, and lends persuasive eloquence to his speech. We have not a word to say against Murray or Baedeker; but neither Murray nor Baedeker can hold a candle to him. He has had leisure, in those low flats above Cologne, to look about and select his prey among the listless companions of his journey. He volunteers a timely elucidation to a party puzzling over a panorama of the Rhine. As the Seven Mountains begin to rise more conspicuously above the river, he predicts what is to appear round the next corner. He is at home in Victor Hugo's 'Rhine'—a book strangely neglected—in Lord Lytton's 'Pilgrims,' in 'Childe Harold,' and all the rest. In short, he has the legends and romance of the river at his finger-ends; indeed he has embroidered them with his fancies in his lonely walks and in much solitary communing. If he finds flint to answer the sharp stroke of his steel, he cannot help being suggestively and originally sparkling. The father of a family might mistrust that sparkle, were you younger: as it is, he considers this chance-acquaintance a singularly well-informed man, and more than suspects he may be "somebody." The matronly lady listens to a good deal she may not understand, but on the whole, is of opinion that it is very edifying talk; while the romantically minded daughters, even to the child of fourteen in short petticoats, are hanging entranced upon his lips, as he tells of melancholy love-passions, from that of Roland and his cloistered betrothed to the tragedies and the witcheries of the Lurlei.

But the ruined keeps above the terraced vines grow monotonous, and the tales of love and of chivalry will repeat themselves and pall. Very well; you can change

the subjects when it pleases you—and, heaven knows, there is comical interest enough in the foreground of those solemn pictures of the past. You talk of love: there may be less of romance in it nowadays, but it is a passion to which those domestic Germans will be constantly and devotedly addicted. We are ready to lay any odds in reason that there will be at least half-a-dozen newly married German couples on board. The gliding of the high-pressure boat against the gentle current of the stream is in happy harmony with their tranquil satisfaction. And we are prepared to bet freely on the double event, that three couples out of the half-dozen have clasped hands and interlaced their arms round their waists. It is a charming trait of their simple manners that they indulge in innocent endearments in public, without the slightest trace of false shame. Nevertheless, and all love-stricken as they are, they have begun as they hope to go on. Twenty years hence, with clusters of their shooting olive-plants around them, you would meet them in the beer-gardens from Cologne to Berlin, devouring sausages and *sauerkraut*, and drenching themselves with lager-beer. Now, in the silvery smiles of the youthful honeymoon, they are “restoring” nature with sips from the long-necked flasks of Niersteiner, and nourishing their simple self-contentment on smoked ham, sliced sausages, or summer fruits. But Venus does not have it all her own way, by any means. There is a more boisterous and more convivial bachelor element that gives itself over to the worship of Bacchus, and to the consumption of the strongest and most rancid cigars. The well-to-do German who has broken away

on a brief holiday, or who has never given growing pledges to Fortune, always appears to celebrate his outings by incessant eating and drinking. To be sure, between the rich Rheingau and the vineyards of Bacharach—which had a greater reputation, according to the “Golden Legend,” in the middle ages than at present—there is exceptional excuse for sacrificing to the vine-god. The managers of the Cologne and Düsseldorf Steam Company are wise in their generation; and the wine supplied by their stewards is both respectable in quality and cheap. So there sit the merry toppers, from dewy morning into the falling shadows of the eve, soaking steadily and smoking indefatigably. They give their orders, when the steamer has slipped from her moorings at Cologne, for tippable that is still and light. As the light liquor mounts slowly to the brain, they rise steadily through the prices in the *carte*. Nevertheless, and knowing the danger of the wine-fumes on empty stomachs, they keep calling for the sausages, the raw ham, and the smoked salmon, which serve as ballast to the body while they perpetuate the genial thirst. But that is merely preliminary trifling, and they are lying back for the one-o’clock *table d’hôte*. Then they mean to come with a rush. They dive impetuously below at the announcement of the head-waiter, to come up again steadied and weighted, if not sobered. They have made it matter of conscience in the meantime to get full value for their marks. And now, with a lighter heart and an easier conscience, they can go on calling for fresh liquor. The corks are flying sonorously from the bottles of sparkling Moselle and Rhenish; and faces that were pallid in the morning grow ruddy, through that

ever-thickening veil of tobacco-smoke from the foully unfragrant cigars.

These ostentatiously convivial gentlemen are indulging in an occasional carnival. It is not every day they make holiday, or spend that holiday on a Rhine boat. But the fact that they confound dissipation with enjoyment—that they sit all the day upon hard benches or crank camp-stools, in place of stretching their legs along the broad deck-promenade,—gives the key to the great popularity of the German Baths. They are become a national institution, because they are a national necessity. And they continue to be a national necessity, because during the cure the diseases are being fed which the waters are meant to cope with. All our readers ought to have read Sir Francis Head's 'Bubbles from the Brünnen of Nassau.' And every one who has read them must remember his vivid picture of the early German dinner. Doctors who find their account in chronic indigestions, in liver complaints, and all the evils which gluttony is heir to, have done nothing to discourage that meal; and precisely the same thing is going on to-day. So we cannot say that our German friends are seen to most advantage at their Baths. They are grappling at once with heavy meals and overgrown livers; they eat even to exceptional excess, on the strength of strolls after the morning waters and fixed prices for interminable dinners, and they are disappointed that the waters do not work miracles. On the other hand, the English at these Baths are unusually good-humoured and accessible. You go to Homburg at the end of the London season. You dine—we will say—at the Victoria; you recognise half-a-dozen of acquaintances in

the room, and see some dozen faces besides familiar to you in the Park or Piccadilly. You all meet again in the early morning round the Wein Brunnen or the Stahl Brunnen. You have all been dining and lunching so freely for many months that it is a positive relief to find the excuse of inferior feeding for putting the muzzle on in comparative abstinence, while the fresh breezes from the Taunus hills make all feel infinitely lighter. But after that first sense of physical relief, *ennui* will infallibly follow. Lawn-tennis and other distractions notwithstanding, Homburg is dull after the whirl of gaiety in London. In the natural reaction, people are thankful for small mercies: the rather flat expeditions to the Taunus are things to look forward to and to look back upon; and we need hardly say that stiff social barriers are broken down, and that the man who can put some life into a picnic is sure to be a welcome acquisition. You may form fast and lasting friendships, or you may merely exchange bows with your Homburg intimates when you chance to meet again at home. In the meantime you live in the day, taking small thought for the morrow. You knock up delightful little dinners at your respective hotels; and when you have conscientiously gone through the three weeks' grind of the waters, you exchange confidences as to future plans, and may arrange to meet again in lower Switzerland or the Engadine.

Nothing can be more sociable than the Engadine in winter: so many people are imprisoned together in a great hotel, and are forced into friendships in sheer self-defence. They skate together; they dine together; they flirt or compare notes with each other; they sympathise with each other's

ailments, and when sick or sorry they exchange consolations. But no place can be less sociable than the Engadine in summer. To every one save enthusiastic Alpine Clubmen, the chief charm of Switzerland in the season is the enjoyment of the balmy evenings after dinner. In the Engadine after sunset, it is bitterly cold, so that sitting or sauntering out of doors is impossible. It is impossible to make one's self agreeable, enveloped in furs or in ulsters, when the hotel-keepers, if they knew their own interests, should provide their clients with foot-warmers. How different is it in one of the typical hotels in the Swiss lowlands, — say, for example, the Beau Rivage at Ouchy, or the admirably managed Schweizerhof at Lucerne! There we look on the labours of the day as an agreeable prelude to the intellectual languor of the evening. You go up the Rigi or Mount Pilate in the morning—you may avail yourself of the Rigi railway for the ascent, should you feel lazy. You go down the lake to Fluelen and Altorf, credulously conjuring up the grand myth of Tell and the apple, or sympathising, in the mountain shadows of the very scenes, with the better accredited story of the "honest conspirators" of Grütli. No one of the somewhat Cockney expeditions, except that of Pilate, is more than a light day's work; and you may walk as much or as little as you please. You come back to the late *table d'hôte* which the intelligent Messrs Häuser have arranged at 7.30. There is an excellent dinner, and very good company should you find yourself happily seated. But, even if you have been unfortunate in your next-seat neighbours, you may retrieve that over the coffee,

when all the world adjourns to the verandah outside, to smoke and listen to the music. Supposing the evening to be fine, what scene can be more enchanting? The starry heavens are reflected in the sleeping lake; while to right and left, in the soft lustre of the moonshine, rise the summits that are the sentinels of the Alps, thrown out upon outpost duty. The gentle splash of oars on the water comes to the ear from time to time, through the murmur of the mob of loungers on the promenade before the door. Nothing is more natural or more easy than a self-introduction, as you entangle your chair in some trailing skirt, or resign yourself diplomatically to giving up your place to a lady. For seats are at a premium before that orchestra on the improvised platform; and as you do not personally care for dessert, you have secured a good one by anticipating the rush from the dinner-tables. Having resigned your chair, and being reduced to leaning against one of the columns of the verandah, you are repaid in the cosmopolitan coin of grateful looks and subsequent small-talk. The talk turns, of course, on the schemes for the morrow. And then you meet your acquaintances of the evening before, on the steamer bound for Vitznau, and the ascent of the Rigi, or elsewhere.

The Rigi expedition is intensely Cockneyfied, no doubt; but all the same, it is picturesque, and may be extremely agreeable. From the picturesque point of view there is not much to choose between going up as in the olden time in a caravan of ponies and bag-bearers, or in scaling the cliffs in a train that is carried up by extraordinary gradients. Practically, for the student of human nature the modern system is an advantage. The company is more

promiscuous than before, and the tourists are consequently more amusing; while in the babel of voices and the scramble, like instinctively draws to like. Had we all ridden up at a foot-pace or walked in a blazing sun, your fair friends of the evening before would have been wearied, worried, and out of temper. They would have been looking out on the ride upwards for the stumbles of their mounts, and troubling themselves about damage to their complexions. Between their bridles and their sunshades, their minds would have been more than pre-occupied. Whereas they have come in cool and collected, on stepping out of the train at the Schiedeck or the Kulm: they are longing to stretch their limbs, and predisposed for the scenery as for the luncheon. Now that we are more than middle-aged, we have outgrown the wild fancy of sleeping on the Kulm to see the sunrise. Nothing except a party in quarantine in the height of a cholera panic can show much more miserably than the shivering group of unkempt and unshaved mortals prematurely turned out of their warm blankets to stand shuddering in these penetrating fogs. Nor do we hold greatly with the fashion of sojourning in hotels lower down on the hill, where a long continuance of rain and mists may blot you blankly for a week or more out of the lower world. But Cockney though the place be, a glorious noonday upon the summit of the Rigi comes as near to pure enjoyment as anything upon earth. As for the wide view of vales and mountains, of villages, rivers, and slumbering lakes, it is hardly possible to over-praise it. When the air is still and the heavens are serene, the lights and shadows falling on the waters far beneath,

are things that can never be forgotten. It was but a few weeks ago we looked down on the Lake of Zug, from a vulgar Vanity Fair of paltry booths and ragged beggars. Yet the spirit shook itself free from its surroundings, soaring up, or rather sinking down, into Fairyland. For the lake was shaded from the brightest emerald to a profound steel-coloured blue; while each fleecy cloud flung a heavy black shadow many feet below the surface, as if some demon, in an ineffectual attempt to mar the beauty, had been emptying Brobdingnagian ink-bottles into the water. In such circumstances, when you are coming back to earth from the romance world, you turn naturally to those around you in a craving for sympathy. These lights and shadows that elude the pencil or the brush, suggest poetry and art, and those world-renowned masters who have groped their way with more or less success into the very sanctuaries of the ideal. And in a moment like that you make greater progress in intimacy than in the casual meetings of half-a-dozen years in the crushes of a London season.

But we have said more than enough to indicate the possibilities of enjoyment in solitary summer touring. At all events, were we to go on, we should certainly repeat ourselves. Yet we have not touched on many of the types of tourists who are a pleasure or an interest to those who come across them. There is the scurrying American, full of 'cuteness, ignorance, and inquisitiveness, who is a capital companion when you are in strong health and high spirits, and who will in any case be hurrying ahead of you at your next halting-place. There is the educated American — thoughtful, lettered, and refined — who, from his inex-

haustible funds of research and observation, will teach you far more than you are ready to learn. There is the independent lady-tourist, who roves abroad "on her own hook," and who is rather brisk, versatile, and able-bodied than what is popularly known as strong-minded. If the *convenances* permitted, and if she would have more consideration for the frailties of the flesh, we should ask no better temporary travelling comrade. She is always light and bright, and is as many-minded and as quick to reflect flashes from everything around as any patent light-house reflector with its myriads of facets and prisms. Her irresistible energy would be too much for ordinary males: she would be knocking one up at abnormal hours; she would be absolutely indifferent to food and meal-times; and being necessarily frugal, like most spinsters of a certain age,

would sooner billet you in some clean mountain *auberge* than in the best-managed hotel of the low country. Cleanliness and comfort are her watchwords of travel; and as to comfort, you and she would be perpetually at cross-purposes. But she comes as a blessing we have often had good cause to appreciate, when we have met her of an evening in dismal weather in one of those "homely hotels" which she loves to patronise. We might multiply examples of the kind, but we must bring these rambling experiences to a conclusion. We think they may have pointed the moral, that it may be more prudent to depend on chance acquaintances than to risk hazarding those solid friendships which are more precious as they become more rare. In the one case the loss may possibly be irreparable; in the other, the gains may probably be considerable.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN INDO-CHINA.

THE tide of empire which for so many centuries flowed westward has now begun to retrace its course, and the descendants of the Asiatic immigrants who poured over Europe like a flood are once again reviving imperialism among the ruins of Eastern kingdoms, Indian principalities, and Indo-Chinese sovereignties. To Russia, Destiny has allowed to fall the task of reconstituting the Asiatic Khanates; to ourselves has been assigned the duty of reviving the past glories of Indian rule and pomp; and in Indo-China the flags of England and France are waving over the western and eastern shores of the peninsula, separated only by native kingdoms whose independence is threatened, and whose existence is endangered by the morbidly ambitious designs of the French Republic. In their present undefended condition these States form an irresistible temptation to the predatory instincts of the invaders of Tongking, who make no secret of their desire to establish in Indo-China a rival empire to our Indian possessions, which shall be destined, as they fondly hope, to restore to France the prestige lost to her by the war of 1870. With more candour or with greater cynicism than the Russians, who find a political necessity or an ethnographical reason for every advance they make in Asia, the French declare openly that their object is the gratification of a political ambition. They have no need to employ fine phrases to palliate their aggressions or explain their onward movements, for as yet they have not aroused the susceptibilities of European Foreign Offices; and the nations on whose rights they tram-

ple, and whose lands they confiscate, are regarded as being beyond the range of practical politics. It is fortunate for them that no explanations are asked; for the wolf in the fable had not greater difficulty in accounting for his onslaught on the lamb, than the French would have to find an apology for their absorption of Annam and their avowed designs on Cambodia and Siam.

The remoteness of the objects of attack is doubtless in the aggressor's favour. Even Macaulay's celebrated schoolboy would be puzzled to define the frontiers of Cambodia, or to name the political divisions of Siam; and yet, as regards both mineral and commercial wealth, the peninsula is so abundantly rich, that when the time comes that these advantages can be developed, and the blessings of a strong and just rule can be shared in by all the nations embraced within its limits, it will of necessity be forced into the forefront of oriental questions. Stretching from the mouth of the Brahmaputra southwards to Singapore, and eastwards to the Chinese and Tongkingese frontier, it separates the ancient empires of India and China, and forms a convenient resting-place for those tribes who have been driven by political or other necessities to seek "fresh woods and pastures new" beyond the frontiers of the neighbouring kingdoms. By its physical configuration it is admirably adapted for such a purpose, being so sharply divided off into three great divisions, that peoples of different nations, languages, and tongues are able to preserve, without effort, their separate existences. From

the great Tibetan plateau strike off the two mountain-systems which, trending southward, separate, on the one hand, the valley of the Irawadi from that of the Menam and Mekong; and on the other, form the watershed of the Song-koi and the smaller rivers which flow into the China Sea. This configuration governs the political distribution of the area. On the west, the valley of the Irawadi is naturally dominated by the Power which holds India; on the east, the region lying between the more easterly range and the sea, or, in other words, Tongking and Cochin-China, naturally falls under Chinese influence; while the valleys of the Menam and Mekong, which form the central portion of the peninsula, being relieved from the overshadowing influences of the two empires, are free to remain under the independent rule of the sovereigns of Siam and Cambodia. Naturally the wealth and power of these last-named States centre in the fertile deltas of the Menam and Mekong rivers, and along the shores of the Gulf of Siam. As the distance from these points of attraction increases, the authority of the Governments diminishes, until a line is reached where it gives way entirely to the rule of the Shan chieftains, who dominate the hilly and mountainous country between the northern frontiers of Siam and Cambodia and the southern frontier of China.

Like the Highlands of Scotland and the Cantabrian mountains of Spain, this Shan region forms a vast Cave of Adullam, in which all the disaffected and disinherited tribes from the neighbouring countries have from time immemorial sought refuge. There we find descendants of the numerous aboriginal tribes of Western and Central China, who have been dispossessed

of their territories by the advancing tide of Chinese invasion—the Lao, the Lung, the Kwei, the Pung, the “Pigmies,” the “Long-legs,” and many others; there we find the descendants of the tattooing tribes from Eastern China, who, having followed in their migrations the coast-line of China, have found their way westward from Tongking, and have made common cause with their fellow-exiles in the Shan States; and there we find representatives of tribes from Burmah and Further India, who, driven by political exigencies from their original seats, sought in the mountains which border on the upper waters of the Salween and Mekong for that peace which the valleys of the Brahmaputra and Irawadi denied them. It is obvious that the presence of these populations on the borders of kingdoms which, like all oriental States, rise and sink in the scale of importance and power as they chance to be ruled by able or incompetent sovereigns, has the making of many a pretty quarrel. To follow and describe the changes of fortune and the varying frontiers which fell to the lot of Siam and Annam during their early histories, would be as profitless as to attempt to unravel a tangled skein of silk cut into short lengths. There is no consecutive course of events to narrate. The rise to the surface of the troubled waters of political strife of adventurers more daring and able than the adventurers in possession was a constantly recurring process, and one which invariably presaged a period of disorder and bloodshed, followed possibly by a temporary gleam of prosperity, lasting just so long as the victors were able to hold their own against all other Mahdis of rebellion.

The one element of comparative stability in this changing fit-

ful condition of affairs was the kingdom of Cambodia. This State, which divided the central plains of the peninsula with Siam, possessed at an early period an amount of culture and power which placed it at an advantage over its weak and uncultivated neighbour. Saigon, which was then its principal port, offered safe and convenient anchorage to the merchant-vessels from China, Borneo, India, and Arabia, which were attracted to its wharves by the rich and varied merchandise of the markets of Cambodia. With commerce came fame and consideration; and in A.D. 68, a learned Brahman missionary sought to add the knowledge of religion to the material privileges of the people. At the time of the arrival of this holy man the destinies of the Cambodians were in the hands of a queen, who, from being attracted by the doctrines of the Brahman, became so enamoured of his person that she accepted him as her consort. From his coign of vantage the *quondam* missionary devoted himself to the propagation of his faith, and to the instruction of the people in the knowledge of architecture and astronomy. Much that he taught has left no trace upon the sands of time, but happily some enduring monuments of his fame still exist in the ruins of the magnificent buildings at Ongcor and elsewhere, which have lately been brought to light. If written history were silent, and we had no other evidence of the bygone power of Cambodia than these remains, their stones would speak with a thousand tongues of the wealth, culture, and authority of those who could raise such splen-

did dwellings for their gods and their kings.

Speaking of the temple which forms the centre of the Ongcor ruins, M. Mouhot says:—

“Commencing from the building which forms the principal entrance to the temple is a causeway 9 metres wide by 342 metres in length; it is raised 1 metre from the level of the ground. It is covered by huge blocks of stone, carefully joined together throughout its entire length, and is surrounded by a balustrade, partially in ruins, about 10 centimetres high, composed of long stones with bevelled edges, very massive, and covered with sculptures. On each side are six platforms of earth ascended by several steps, upon each of which is a serpent with seven heads, some erect, others thrown back.

“In the centre of the causeway are two elegant pavilions, one on each side, having at each extremity a portico 33 metres 66 centimetres in length. At the end of the causeway, and at the foot of the terrace, are, on each side of the latter, two ponds or sheets of water. A balustrade like that of the causeway, and resting like it on a sculptured basement, springs from the foot of the terrace and runs all round the monument. At certain intervals there are large staircases of several steps each.

“The terrace is 2 metres 30 centimetres in height, and is surrounded by 112 fluted columns, surmounted by capitals, formed in each case of one single block of stone. The basement, like that of the whole building, is ornamented with very beautiful sculptured cornices, varied in style, and entirely covered with delicate carvings representing roses and arabesques, worked with the chisel, with a taste and skill equally wonderful. This terrace forms a cross, each arm of which is 122 metres in length and 12 metres 16 centimetres wide. There are three flights of steps, upon each of which are four lions reclining upon their pedestals.”¹

In the present condition of the

¹ Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China. By the late M. Henri Mouhot. Vol. i. pp. 286-289.

ruins of these once splendid buildings, overgrown with brushwood and buried in the depths of the forests, we have a symbolical picture of the prosperity and decay of Cambodia. For many centuries the descendants of the missionary royal consort fully maintained their country's honour, and extended the influence of their culture over the surrounding States. Their ambassadors visited the Courts of China, Siam, and Burmah; and their merchants frequented the markets of Southern Asia, and even penetrated as far west as the ports of the Roman empire. They exercised lordship over the neighbouring Shan principalities, and carved for themselves provinces out of the bordering kingdoms of Siam and Annam. But in the eighth century a cloud settled over the fortunes of the country. The Shans, who so long had recognised the Cambodians as their superiors, rebelled against them and overran the northern portion of their country; while the despised Siamese made themselves masters of the provinces bordering on the sea. Since that time the occasional accession of able sovereigns has imparted spasmodic intervals of vigour into the royal councils; but as a kingdom, Cambodia then fell from its high estate to the level of its neighbours. The mandates of its sovereigns were no longer words to conjure with, and its armies fought on equal terms with troops on whom their ancestors had been used to look down with scorn. Henceforth the constantly changing fortunes of war decided the constitution of the Government and the extent of the frontiers. Like pieces of cork in troubled waters, the States of Cambodia, Siam, Burmah, and Annam were for centuries tossed about—now one and

now another being thrown up on to the surface. But *corruptio optimi pessima*, and by degrees the Cambodians, from being the most powerful people in Indo-China, became the weak victims of their neighbours' tyranny. For the most part Siamese influence prevailed over the fallen State, and more than once Siamese generals pillaged the country and led away captive thousands of the conquered. But the pretensions of Siam to direct the destinies of Cambodia were not such as the Court of Annam on the east was disposed to acknowledge; and, like another Belgium, Cambodia became the battle-field on which her two neighbours were to fight for the supremacy. The contest ended to the advantage of Siam, but not so decisively as to free Cambodia from the fear of Annam; and the result was, that with ready homage her kings bowed the supple knee to the sovereigns of both countries, at the sametime that, from an unexplained cause, they paid tribute to China.

The history of Siam contains the same uncertain and varying fortunes which distinguish the later records of Cambodia. Unlike the Cambodians, however, the Siamese possess no early monuments reflecting past glories; but, *en revanche*, they can boast that while Cambodia gradually fell in the scale of nations, their country grew and flourished. Not that they had not foreign dangers to encounter. On one occasion, at least, the same peril which now threatens their existence seemed about to overtake them. Towards the end of the 17th century, a Franco-Greek named Phaulcon, who stood high in the favour of the king, induced him to apply to Louis XIV. for a body-guard of two hundred French soldiers. The request was readily granted, and the king was

urged to apply again for a like number. These four hundred men Phaulcon had intended to use as a lever by which to raise to the throne a youth who was to be a puppet of his own and a tool of France. Fortunately for the Siamese, the plot was discovered before the second two hundred had embarked, and Phaulcon, having been found guilty of treason, was punished by the loss of his head. Of late years the enlightened conduct of the successive rulers of Siam has so strengthened and widened the authority of the country, that at the present time it occupies the highest position among native kingdoms in the peninsula. For many years the kings of Cambodia have received their investiture at the hands of the kings of Siam, and Siamese influence has steadily advanced among the Shan tribes on the northern frontier, softening their manners, and rendering them willing subjects of the Court of Bangkok. It is indeed beyond question that if the Siamese were left free to develop the resources of their country, and to continue to raise the intellectual standard of the people, they would become a great and powerful nation. This is the goal for which their capabilities fit them, and it is the one to which all those who sympathise with their aspirations desire that they should attain.

Such are the two central kingdoms of the peninsula, and it now remains to speak of the countries which flank them—viz., Burmah on the west and Annam on the east. And here we have to leave the domain of purely native history, and to dive into the troubled waters of foreign complications. The proximity of Burmah to India brought it at an early period within the knowledge of Western adventurers. Backed by a Papal bull, which gave to the Portuguese the exclu-

sive right to trade in the Indian Ocean, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape in 1497 in search of the privileges thus generously conferred, and established himself at Goa. On the foundations thus laid, Albuquerque essayed a few years later to extend his country's power by an expedition against Malacca, which was at this time the great emporium of trade in the East, and occupied a similar position in Asia to that which Venice had lately held in Europe. The attack was successful, and the conqueror having established his authority, sent ambassadors to Siam and Pegu with the object of opening up commercial relations with those countries. At this time Burmah was divided into the three kingdoms of Arakan, Toungoo, and Pegu, between which internecine wars were ceaselessly waged. Golden opportunities were thus afforded to the Portuguese adventurers of gaining a footing in the country by lending their assistance to one or other of the rival combatants. These opportunities were eagerly seized; and thus in the sixteenth century we find a band of filibusters, under one Morales, supporting the King of Pegu against the Toungoo sovereign, who on his part was also able to call a fleet of Portuguese privateers to his aid. A few years later this same sovereign attacked Bangkok at the head of a body of Portuguese mercenaries, and would probably have carried the city had it not been fortified and defended by another body of Portuguese soldiers in the pay of the King of Siam. Tenderness of conscience was not a characteristic of these pioneers of civilisation; and, sheltered as they were under the spiritual ægis of a Papal decree, they felt themselves free to advance the interests of themselves and their country by any means

which fortune might throw in their way. The superiority which their weapons and knowledge of military tactics gave them, tempted the more ambitious of their leaders to dream of empire while serving as led captains. One of these, Philip de Brito by name, after having helped the King of Arakan to conquer Pegu, threw off his allegiance, and proclaimed himself sovereign of the vanquished territory. By an ingenious trick, which would have done honour to the subtlety of a Bokharian Khan, his supporters were detached from him, and he himself paid the penalty of his treason by the tortures of impalement. Another man of the De Brito kind was Sebastian Gonzales, who, having begun life as a soldier, ended it as a pirate, and ultimately suffered one of the forms of violent death which are common to Eastern countries. Wars, revolutions, and anarchy make up the sum of Burmese history during the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth century; and it was not until the accession of Alompra, the founder of the present dynasty, in 1752, that any sequence in the course of events becomes discernible. With the Eastern hyperbole, which makes the Japanese claim descent from the gods, the Manchus from a celestial being, and the Tibetans from a dog, Alompra maintained that he could trace his pedigree in direct descent from Sakyamuni. Those among his subjects who were better informed, recognised in him an adventurous hunter of obscure origin, whose only title to honour was success. When once established on the throne, however, he showed himself sensible of the dignity of his kingdom. He founded the city of Rangoon at the delta of the Irawadi, and did all that lay in his power to extend

the commercial interests of his subjects. His successor, Bodoaphrā, possessed all the ambition of his father, but none of those regal qualities which gained Alompra his kingdom. He was cruel, vindictive, and cowardly. In gratification of a mere whim, he built a new capital on the Irawadi—the city of the Immortals—and compelled the inhabitants of Ava to migrate to it bag and baggage. He put down a rebellion in Pegu which was the outcome of his infamous misrule, with a cruelty such as Timur the Tartar would have delighted in, and laid desolate whole districts which failed to show that loyalty to himself which he thought his due. He led an expedition against Siam; but losing courage as he approached the frontier, he retired precipitately. The one great achievement of his reign was the conquest of Arakan, and this he accomplished by craft rather than by fighting. Troops in the disguise of Buddhist priests were smuggled into the country, who at a given signal rose against the king, seized his capital, and placed their master on the throne. Puffed up by this success, Bodoaphrā dreamed of leading his armies against India, China, and Siam; but this, like many other emanations of his mad brain, never got beyond the abstract stage of desire; and, deferring, on second thoughts, to revive the faded loyalty of his subjects by an appeal to their religious fanaticism, he proclaimed himself a Buddha. But this assumption failed to produce the desired effect; and after some years of waning power, he died in 1819, “unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.” Father San Germano, who lived in Burmah during more than twenty years of his reign, thus describes him:—

“His very countenance is the index

of a mind ferocious and inhuman to the highest degree; . . . and it would not be an exaggeration to assert that during his reign more victims have fallen by the hand of the executioner than by the sword of the common enemy. . . . The good fortune which has attended him . . . has inspired him with an idea that he is something more than mortal, and that this privilege has been granted him on account of his numerous good works. . . . A few years since he thought to make himself a god."

As Bodoaphrā's many wives left him without a surviving son, his grandson, Hpagyidōa, succeeded to his throne. In every evil quality the new king fully came up to the level of his grandsire. He began his reign by re-establishing his capital at Ava, and by making war upon Assam. Here, for the first time, he came into collision with British soldiers; and, by virtue of superior numbers, he at the outset gained some advantage over our troops. This success was of the nature of that kind of good fortune by which the prince of darkness is said to lure young gamblers on to their destruction. Because he had succeeded in repulsing an attack made by an insufficient British force on a fortified position, he deemed that he could withstand the armies of the British empire, and ventured to demand duties from British subjects on goods carried up the Naf river, which separated Burmese from British territory. Not content with this act of illegality, he attacked the island of Shāpuri, overpowered the garrison, and marched an army across the Arakanese frontier in the direction of Chittagong. Here again fortune in a minor degree fought on his side, and at Rāmu his troops attacked and defeated the occupying force.

These events began in Hpagyidōa

so dangerous an arrogance, that, coupled with his persistently aggressive action in Assam, Kachār, and Manipur, it was deemed absolutely necessary to check his pretensions. War was therefore declared against him by Lord Amherst, the Governor-General of India; and two armies—one destined to act against Rangoon, and the other against the Assam frontier—were despatched under Sir Archibald Campbell and General M'Morine respectively. In the north the British troops were, with one slight exception, uniformly successful. Rangpur, the capital of Assam, surrendered without striking a blow, and Manipur was occupied without much difficulty.

In the south the British arms were equally triumphant. Rangoon was taken after little more than a show of resistance, and the towns of Tavoy and Mergui, in Tenasserim, and of Martaban and Pegu, fell into our possession. The Burmese now became thoroughly alarmed. Every available soldier was enrolled for the national defence; and the most trusted general, Mahā Bandula, was commissioned to lead the army against the invaders. Doubtless this officer did all that Burmese strategy and Burmese courage were able to accomplish; but neither one nor the other saved his army of 60,000 men from suffering so crushing a defeat, that he was compelled to retreat precipitately within the fortifications of Danubyu, on the Irawadi.

But though defeated, Bandula was still at the head of a large force, and in complete command of the district round Danubyu. He was a man who governed with the draconic severity common to Eastern rulers, and gained from his subjects the obedience which orientals only yield to force. For no very

heinous offences he ordered two of his generals to be sawn asunder between planks of wood, and meted out punishments of a like kind to all offenders who outraged his capricious sense of military law. The first object of the renewed campaign was to dislodge this truculent general, and after one unsuccessful assault Danubyu was taken, not without much stubborn fighting. The loss inflicted on the defenders was terrible, and Bandula was among the slain. This disaster produced a powerful impression on the country; and had it not been for the existence of a strong war-party at Court, headed by the queen and her brother, who, with Arabian-Night-like good fortune, had exchanged a fish-shop for a palace, the war would have probably been brought to a close. As it was, the king was induced to accept the offer of an imprisoned prince, Pukhān Wungyi by name, to sweep the invaders off the sacred soil of Burmah. It chanced that among this man's fellow-prisoners were some Europeans who had been arrested on the outbreak of the war; and, believing that the sacrifice of these unfortunates would be an offering well-pleasing to his gods, he ordered their execution as a preliminary to the campaign. Fortunately for his intended victims, however, the same enemies who had secured his original arrest now came forward and accused him of a fresh conspiracy against the king. A search made in his house furnished enough real or manufactured evidence to satisfy the timid vacillating Hpagyidōa, and the order went forth that, instead of taking the command of the army, the newly appointed general should be trodden to death by elephants. The sentence was carried out, and the king's half-brother Mengmyatbo was appoint-

ed in his place. But believing success to be impossible, this new commander deemed it wise to allow the war to languish, and even carried his *laissez faire* policy to the length of permitting the British to occupy Prome without resistance. At this point of the campaign some efforts were made by the Burmese to arrive at terms of peace, and a treaty was actually signed (January 1826) by both parties. But as the real object of the Burmese in opening negotiations was merely to gain time, the treaty was never ratified. Unfortunately, however, the *ruse* justified the expectations of its inventors by enabling them to surround General Campbell with an army of 40,000 men. From this trap the British general extricated himself by a daring movement, which ended in a brilliant victory. The Burmese army, defeated on all sides, was completely demoralised, and the Shan levies marched off in a body to their native hills, leaving the road northward clear for the advance. After a short delay at Myedé, on the Irawadi, caused by a renewal of futile negotiations, General Campbell occupied the ancient capital, Pugān, and eventually pushed on to Yandabo, in the immediate neighbourhood of Ava.

The presence of the enemy within four miles of his palace was an outward and visible sign of the defeat of his armies which it was beyond the power of the king to ignore, and a genuine desire for peace was exchanged in his councils for the warlike policy which up to this time had prevailed. No difficulties were raised on the side of the British in coming to terms. The war had never been popular in England, and a treaty of peace was the one thing desired by the East India Direc-

tors. But Campbell was, however, bound to remember that he was in the position of a victorious general, with the capital of his enemy in his power; and considering, also, the importance of establishing a practicable *modus vivendi* between the Court of Ava and the Directors, he declared it to be a *sine qua non* that the provinces of Assam and Arakan, and the coast of Tenasserim, including the portion of the province of Martaban lying east of the Salween river, should be ceded to the British Government. To this the king consented, and the curtain fell on the conclusion of the first Burmese war.

Though few positive advantages accrued to the British from the war, with the exception of the ceded territory, it secured to them the negative advantage of being left alone; and as for some time they were busily occupied with the task of organising the government of their newly acquired provinces, they were content to allow the Burmese "to stew in their own gravy." This they proceeded to do in the most approved oriental fashion. The king, who had long shown symptoms of insanity, at last became so unmanageable that in 1837 he was deposed in favour of his brother, Therawadi. To Englishmen the change of ruler made little or no difference. Up to the time of his accession, Therawadi had courted the society of their countrymen and favoured their cause; but with his crown came a complete change in his conduct towards them. He out-Heroded his predecessor in arrogance and obstinacy, and declared his intention of ignoring the treaty of Yandabo, and of reconquering the provinces ceded by that instrument to England. In internal affairs, also, he revived the worst traditions of his ancestors.

The late queen and her brother, the *quondam* fishmonger, were by his orders executed with frightful barbarity, and the ministers of the preceding reign were compelled to do the work of common labourers as a preliminary degradation to their appearing on the execution-ground. With a man so imbued with the worst vices of oriental despots it was impossible for English Residents to hold diplomatic intercourse, and in 1840 it was found necessary definitely to withdraw our representative from his Court. Five years later the hereditary taint of madness became so pronounced, that, like his predecessor, he was deposed and placed in confinement. Unfortunately, the change from father to son, from Therawadi to Pugān, brought no alleviation either to the tyranny exercised over the people or to the injustice with which foreigners were treated. Indeed, the whips of Therawadi became scorpions under Pugān, until so dire were the miseries of his people, that they rose against the minister who was the instrument employed for their torture, and who had earned a double share of their hatred by professing the religion of Mahomet. Like Henry VIII., Pugān never scrupled to disown an agent who had the misfortune to arouse serious disaffection; and without hesitation he threw his minister to the people, who exercised their ingenuity in inventing refined tortures with which to bring to a close his execrable existence.

By this time the incidents of the war of 1824 had almost faded from the national memory, and Pugān sought to recover the regard of his subjects by demonstrating against foreigners. In defiance of right and justice, he imprisoned two English captains, Lewis and Shepherd, at Rangoon, and dis-

played so determinately hostile a spirit towards the British, that Lord Dalhousie was compelled once more to undertake the thankless task of taking up arms. This second war was of short duration, mainly owing to the fact that Lord Dalhousie assumed conclusions for himself, without waiting to go through the empty form of gaining the concurrence of the Burmese. Thus having taken Rangoon, Martaban, and Bassein, he kept them, together with the rest of the province of Pegu. The accession in 1853 of Mengdon, *vice* Pagan deposed, in no way improved the political position; and Lord Dalhousie, finding it necessary to establish a more definite northern boundary to the province of Pegu than had previously been fixed, and knowing the impossibility of negotiating with the Burmese, drew a line across the map from Mendoon, on the eastern frontier of Arakan, to a point due east on a branch of the Salween, and proclaimed that the boundary between the two empires.

This determined line of conduct exercised a most beneficial effect on our relations with the Court of Ava; and the results of our presence in the surrounding provinces added so distinctly to our influence, that in 1862 Sir Arthur Phayre found little difficulty in inducing the king to enter into treaty obligations with this country. One great obstacle to trade had always been the monopolies which the king held in his own hand. These he now agreed to abandon, except those in mineral-oil, timber, and precious stones. The effect of these concessions soon became apparent in the increase of trade, as shown by the fact, that whereas in 1868-69 the imports into Upper Burmah were of the value of Rs.524,378, in the year following they were

reckoned at Rs.1,401,612 — an increase of 167 per cent. This is but a specimen of the impetus which was given to trade by the act of freeing it from the unnatural restrictions which kept it within narrow bounds and hampered it with galling exactions.

In the annexed provinces the effect of the change of rule was equally marked. "People turn," said Mencius, "to a benevolent rule as water flows downwards and as wild beasts run to the wilds;" and never was there a more explicit confirmation of this saying of the Chinese philosopher than in the case of the ceded Burmese provinces. At the time of the annexation of Arakan in 1826, the population was 100,000, and in 1855 it had increased to 366,310; in other words, the population had multiplied within that period 250 per cent. Between 1829 and 1855 the population of Tenasserim increased more than 200 per cent—that is to say, from 70,000 to 213,692; and while in 1852 Pegu was peopled by 500,000 souls, in 1865 this number had increased to 1,350,989. Again, the number of acres under cultivation in Arakan in 1830 was 66,227, and in 1855, 353,885. In Tenasserim 100,657 acres were under cultivation in 1843, and twelve years later this number had increased to 181,681. Meanwhile the revenue showed even greater elasticity. In Arakan the annual receipts, which for 1826 were £23,225, amounted in 1855 to £127,729. In this last year the value of the trade was reckoned at £1,876,998. In Tenasserim, which has fewer capabilities for expansion, and has always been a comparatively unprofitable province, the increase for the same periods was from £2676 to £83,300. The latest returns show that this rate

of increase has been steadily maintained; and from them we learn, that whereas the total revenue of British Burmah was in 1876-77 £1,771,743, in 1883-84 it was £2,850,036.

These statistics speak for themselves: they show that the instant certain provinces were taken from under the heavy yoke of Burmese rule, and were placed under a just and equitable system of government, the populations, the areas of land under cultivation, and the revenues increased by leaps and by bounds. People from the neighbouring native provinces were attracted to them "as water flows downwards," and this in face of strenuous opposition on the part of the Burmese Government to the migration of its subjects into our dependencies. The hostility towards us which had been fostered among the people by the authorities must be reckoned also as another deterrent to persons desiring to cross the frontier, more especially as up to 1852 the ceded provinces offered neither agriculturally nor commercially any advantages which were comparable with those enjoyed by the fertile native province of Pegu. Watered by the lower waters of the Irawadi, and possessing the convenient port of Rangoon, that province was to the rest of Burmah what the delta of the Nile is to Egypt. But so grinding was the tyranny of the Ava Government, that in 1852 it possessed a population not much larger than that of the comparatively sterile province of Arakan.

If the hearts of the Burmese rulers had not been hardened, and their ears closed to all thoughts of progress and reform, these facts, and the admonitions given by the wars of 1826 and 1852, might have furnished lessons which would have shown them the ad-

visability of taking heed to their ways. But neither history nor current events have ever effected the slightest improvement in the system of government or in the personal conduct of the sovereigns. The ruling powers seem incapable of advancing, and cling to the worst traditions and most degraded habits with a persistency that nothing can overcome. If it had been possible to hope for any improvement in a Burmese sovereign, it would have been in the case of the present king. Educated at a Protestant missionary school, and being acquainted with European usages, he had opportunities for good which were denied to his graceless predecessors. But no sooner did he ascend the throne than all he had learned was thrown to the winds, and he became as cruel a despot and as debased a liver as any who had gone before him. His first royal act was to sign the death-warrants of all his brothers, and his subsequent policy has been consistent with this barbarous beginning. A minister who offends him, or an envoy who is unsuccessful in his mission, is made to shuffle off this mortal coil without the slightest compunction. The remark, as such an unfortunate leaves the presence-chamber, "I don't wish to see that man again," is held by the subservient royal counsellors as sufficient warrant for his execution, and the king expects to be told that death has suddenly overtaken his late visitor. It is not long ago that the last of several palace massacres startled Europe by its atrocity. On some suspicion of a conspiracy against his throne, the king ordered seventy of his nearest relatives to be battered and choked to death or buried alive.

At first the king showed some disinclination to this wholesale

slaughter; but the advice of his queen prevailed, and in obedience to his command "seventy of the royal blood—men, women, and children—were murdered in the next three days, and buried within the palace in a long trench dug for the purpose. The eldest prince—the Mekhaya—a man nearly three times Theebaw's age, and hated for his fierce, proud demeanour, died shrieking for mercy at the hands of his own slaves whom he had often tortured. The Tholnsay Mintha, equally overbearing in his manner, and a fanatical hater of the English, . . . gained in his death an esteem he had never known while living. With his last breath he hurled defiance and imprecations at his brother, whom he had always despised, and prophesied a speedy and bloody end for the 'runaway monk.' The weakly and gentle-mannered Meingtohen murmured a prayer that the hideous sin of murder might be pardoned to its instigator and perpetrators, and then resigned his neck to the club which sent him to the blissful seats of *nat-dewahs*. The princesses were subjected to nameless horrors; and the treatment of the children recalled the days when ravaging hordes marched through the land with babes pitted on their pike-staffs for standards. The poor old regent of Pegu, governor of Rangoon when the British came in 1852, had his nostrils and gullet crammed with gunpowder, and was thus blown up. But the tale of horrors is not one to enlarge upon. They were conducted by those who are now the king's most trusted advisers. All the three days bands of music were playing throughout the palace, and dancers posturing to divert attention from

what was going on."¹ This list by no means exhausts the number of those who have fallen victims to Theebaw's malignity. Following the example of his grandfather, who, like another Saul, was in the habit of hurling a javelin at any one who offended him, Theebaw has placed the lives of many members of his Court in jeopardy by means of the self-same weapon; but not being so good a shot as his grand-sire, he has not succeeded as yet in doing more than frightening his intended victims. Like many other tyrants, Theebaw is subject in turn to the tyranny of his wife, a cruel, jealous, and violent woman, who gained the throne by the refusal of her sister to accept the position of queen. The fate of this strong-minded recalcitrant is shrouded in mystery, but the punishment meted out to her maids of honour is well known. Their hands were chopped off.

An evil temper, a love of gin, the society of cringing counsellors, and the tyranny of a shrewish wife, have made Theebaw a pest to his countrymen. The monopolies which Mengdon abolished have been revived; the proposed reforms in the constitution have been thrown to the winds; and universal corruption has been allowed to flourish unchecked. The natural results have followed. The outlying provinces are in a chronic state of disorder, the country is impoverished, and each year the area over which the king's writs run grows gradually smaller. In no other country in the world would such a state of affairs have been allowed to continue so long; and the time cannot be far distant when the drunken madman who now oppresses the land will be driven from the throne,

¹ The Burman; by Shway Yoe. London: 1882.

and when, it is to be hoped, a new order of things will dawn upon the distracted country.

It has been said that the Burmese are as well governed as they deserve to be, and that they are incapable of understanding or of enjoying the higher rights of citizenship. A glance at the condition of the natives in the provinces subject to England is sufficient to refute this. As traders they are enterprising and industrious. At Rangoon, Maulmein, and other places, they show a pronounced commercial spirit; most of the large teak-forests in Siam are leased out to them or their agents; and so great is the traffic on the railway line from Rangoon to Prome, that at the present time it is the best paying of all the Indian Government railways. The towns which have sprung into existence since the English occupation testify to an extraordinary growth of trade, and to the complete confidence placed by the natives in their present rulers. Maulmein, for example, which in 1826 was a mere fishing-village, was peopled thirty years later by 60,000 souls; and within the same period the population of Akyab increased from a handful to 20,000. But at Rangoon the beneficent effect of our rule is most apparent. The city, which, when we annexed it in 1852, was merely a collection of mean-looking huts, intersected by narrow alleys, is now a handsome town, traversed in every direction by good roads and broad streets. The public buildings are fine and imposing, and a naval yard with repairing-slips adds to the wealth and convenience of the port. Between 1869 and 1881 the population increased from 87,553 to 134,176; and at the present time the annual value of the exports amounts to

above £2,500,000, which sum is again exceeded by the value of the imports. Schools of every grade, hospitals, churches, and charitable institutions, abound and flourish in the town and neighbourhood; and the inhabitants bow to a beneficent Government, compared with which the mildest Eastern rule is a grinding tyranny.

From what has been said, it will be apparent that our wars with Burmah, and our annexation of the British provinces, were the direct and inevitable consequences of our position in India. It is a geographical necessity that the rulers of India should have a preponderating influence in Burmah; and if the king had been willing to enter into friendly diplomatic relations with us, the desire on our part to become possessed of an inch of territory or a stone of a fortress would never have been called into being. But the conduct which it seemed good to successive kings to pursue irresistibly impelled us to the one course which lay open to us; and in this case, therefore, the taunts which are sometimes levelled at our earlier policy in India are altogether inapplicable. And further, we have the gratification of knowing that while our advance into Burmah was directed by causes beyond the sphere of our influence, our presence has been an unmixed good to the people of the annexed provinces. We found them down-trodden, poor, and ignorant; and we have made them self-reliant and well to do, and have placed within their reach the means of acquiring a good and sufficient education. We found them the victims of extortion, and the subjects of a revolting system of judicial cruelty; and we have given them pure-handed justice and an equitable system of laws. The wealthy native is no longer obliged

to hide his treasure in the earth lest it should be wrested from him; but, on the contrary, every inducement is offered him to turn his one talent into tens of talents by means of the countless opportunities for trade which have been opened to him.

But having tested by these reforms the capabilities of the people to appreciate the advantages of practical civilisation, the question arises whether, in the cause of humanity, we should not attempt to alleviate some of the miseries under which the subjects of Theebaw still groan. By a judicious use of our legitimate influence, the country might unquestionably be so opened up as to make it susceptible of improvement; and though Theebaw has hitherto shown himself callous to admonitions, it by no means follows that if he found his revenue increasing he might not be brought to kiss the rod and to yield assent to the internal administrative reforms which common humanity demands. A railway to Bhamo would go far towards effecting this object, and our experience of railways in British Burmah tends to show that such a line would in all probability transform the face of the country and bring peace and plenty to the at present down-trodden natives.

When we compare our transactions in Burmah with the circumstances connected with the French occupation of Cochin-China and Tongking; when we look upon this picture and on that,—it is impossible not to feel that our moral, political, and commercial positions are on quite a different footing from those of the French. Their advance has been throughout an unprovoked aggression; and when we are officially told that it was begun, and has been continued, in an ambitious desire to “damage the Eng-

lish in India,” it requires an unusual amount of forbearance to listen with patience to the flimsy pretexts with which their apologists attempt to defame their enemies, and to palliate their own misdeeds.

Like the people of the Chinese Shan States, the Annamese are descended from some of the aboriginal tribes of China, who, having been dispossessed from their original seats, found for themselves a new home in the long strip of low-lying coastland which separates the inhospitable Tran-ninh range of mountains from the sea. Geographically as well as ethnographically, therefore, the kingdom of Annam forms part of the Chinese system, and until the fifteenth century it virtually remained a Chinese province. About that period a rebellion broke out, headed by Le Loi, a native chieftain, who massacred the Chinese garrisons and proclaimed himself king. This assumption of independence was resented by the Chinese, who sent several armies in succession against the rebels. But the province was not one of vital importance to the empire; and after some years of undecided warfare, the emperor agreed to acknowledge the newly established kingdom on condition that it remained tributary, and that the kings received their patents of royalty from Peking. For a couple of centuries things went smoothly with the new State; but at the end of that time the Viceroy of Cochin-China rebelled against his liege lord, established his independence, and left only the province of Tongking to the successor of Le Loi. The example of successful rebellion set by these usurpers was as infectious as it usually is; and after several attempts had been made by ambitious chiefs to subvert their rule, a rebel leader arose on the Chinese

frontier who swept over the two kingdoms, driving the reigning descendant of Le Loi for succour to Peking, and Gia Long, the King of Cochin-China, to Bangkok for assistance.

Neither of the fugitives gained the support he looked for. The Court of Peking manifested a chilling indifference to the woes of its tributary; and the King of Siam, while offering every hospitality, refused every aid. In these circumstances Gia Long was readily induced to listen to the proposal of Bishop Pigneaux de Béhaine, the chief of the Jesuit Mission at Bangkok, to allow his son to accompany the Bishop to Paris for the purpose of soliciting the help of the French king against his father's enemies. In support of this application the Bishop addressed a memorandum to Louis XVI., in which he set forth that—

"The balance of political power in India appears at the present moment to be largely in favour of the English, and one may be justified in looking upon it as a matter of no little difficulty to restore the equilibrium. In my opinion the establishment of a French colony in Cochin-China will be the surest and most efficacious means to the end. . . . The most certain way of damaging the English in India is to ruin, or at any rate to weaken, her commerce in time of peace. Being situated nearer to China, we should undoubtedly absorb much of her trade. . . . In time of war it would be still more easy to stop all commerce between China and any hostile nations. . . . From such a coign of vantage it would be easy to interfere with the designs which the English evidently have of extending their frontier more to the East."

These arguments found favour in the eyes of the king, who entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with Gia Long, by which he bound himself to restore his *protégé* to the throne in return for conditions which made him

virtually the protector of Annam. But the evil days which fell upon France immediately afterwards made the fulfilment of the king's promise impossible; and the alternatives were thus presented to the Bishop of either letting the matter drop, or of accomplishing by private enterprise the frustrated intention of the king. Without hesitation he adopted the last of these courses; and having recruited in France a well-armed and fairly disciplined force, he invaded Cochin-China, and succeeded in placing the crown of Annam once again on the head of Gia Long. The restored king showed his appreciation of the service done him by showering rewards on the officers of the French forces, by employing them to rebuild his fortresses, and by extending his protection to the Roman Catholic missionaries. But no sooner had the first fervour of his gratitude evaporated than he reversed his tactics, and eventually bequeathed his throne to his youngest son, to the exclusion of the heir of his eldest son who had pleaded his cause in Paris. This nomination pointed clearly to the way the popular breeze was blowing, and the iron hand of persecution began again to fall heavily on the missionaries and their converts. Between 1833 and 1839 two missionaries were strangled, eight were beheaded, and one was torn to pieces, having been previously tortured with hot irons. As years went on, the persecution gathered strength, and the accession to the throne of Thien Tri in 1840, and of Tu Duc in 1848, brought no relief to the sufferers. The occasional appearance of a French frigate off Tourane, the port ceded to France by Louis XVI.'s treaty, temporarily ameliorated their condition; but it was not until 1859 that any serious attempt was made to render their lives and property

secure. In that year Admiral Rigault de Genouilly captured Saigon by assault, and attempted to open negotiations with the Court of Hué. But the Chinese war of 1860 made any further military operations impossible for the time being. So soon, however, as the treaty was signed at Peking, French reinforcements were sent to Saigon; and without encountering any serious opposition, Admiral Charnier made himself master of the provinces of Miho and Bien Hoa, in Cochinchina.

These victories brought Annamese diplomatists into the field; and in 1862 a treaty was signed, by the terms of which the captured province, together with that of Gia Dinh and the island of Poulo Condore, were ceded to the French. To this document Tu Duc affixed his signature, with the object of putting an end to any further advance, but without any intention of abiding loyally by it. He knew that in the presence of *force majeure* he had no choice but to yield; but he consoled himself under the misfortune by looking forward to a time when, the balance of power being reversed, he would be able to tear up the treaty and drive the foreigners into the sea. In his ignorance he exaggerated his own strength, and ignored the ambitious designs of the invaders. Either with or without his cognisance, disturbances shortly afterwards broke out in the ceded provinces. This was exactly what the French wanted. The disturbances were easily quelled, and the provinces of Vinh-luong, Chandoc, and Ha-tien were seized as prizes of war.

While the blow inflicted by this further loss of territory was still smarting, Tu Duc was called upon to face a formidable disturbance in Northern Tongking, caused by the defeated Tai-ping rebels, who, when

driven out of China, moved along the southern route previously travelled by the ancestors of the Annamese. These men, known as the Yellow-flags and Black-flags, to whom brigandage was as the breath of their nostrils, found congenial allies in the pirates and outlaws who infested the northern coasts. Taking advantage of the dilemma in which Tu Duc was thus placed, the French proposed to him that a joint expedition, consisting of French and Annamese troops, should be sent into the disturbed districts. But Tu Duc had grown wary, and he declined the proffered aid. The French, however, were not to be easily turned from their designs, and they intimated to the king their intention of taking the field either with him or without him. The war of 1870 put an end for the time to this scheme; but the instant that the Treaty of Paris was signed, Captain Senez was despatched to the Red River, ostensibly to restore order, but really to attempt to open its waters to French trade. In this object he was supported by Dupuis, an adventurer who, tempted by the reported wealth of the gold-mines of Tongking, had already secured a passport from the Governor of Kwangtung, authorising him to ascend the Red River as far as the Yunnan frontier. This permit was obviously insufficient without the sanction of the King of Annam; and as this was persistently refused, Dupuis, who had with him some 300 or 400 desperadoes, determined to substitute force for negotiation. Without much difficulty he penetrated into Yunnan; and when on his return to Hanoi he found the authorities still hostile, he landed his followers, overawed the officials, and issued a proclamation "au peuple Tonkinois," recommending them to follow their usual avocations, and to leave the man-

darins, with whom alone he had a quarrel, to settle matters with him.

In this difficulty both sides appealed to Saigon,—Dupuis for support against the mandarins, and the mandarins for the recall of Dupuis. Naturally the French Governor of Cochin-China did neither; but by way of a compromise he sent M. Garnier, a French officer who had already distinguished himself in China, to arrange matters between the disputants. The Governor's choice fell on M. Garnier, as being a man who was known to desire the annexation of Tongking for the double purpose of injuring English influence and of advancing that of France. "I wish," he wrote in 1873, "to see a French garrison in Tongking and a railway connecting Yunnan with the Red River. The English will never get over that! I feel that if I am supported, Indo-China is French."

Following the bent of these ideas, Garnier threw himself cordially into Dupuis's schemes; and as the mandarins were still recalcitrant, he issued another proclamation "*au peuple Tonkinois*," assuring them that he was not at war with their countrymen, and then proceeded to make war by capturing the citadel of Hanoi. As though the loss of Hanoi had broken the spirit of the Annamese, the remaining fortified towns fell almost without resistance into the hands of the French, and within a few weeks Garnier found himself master of the delta of the Red River. But though in Eastern countries courage and dash bear down all opposition for the moment, there comes a day of reckoning; and so Garnier found. So soon as they had recovered from their surprise at the rapidity of the French victories, the Annamese, with the help of their Chinese allies, began to close round the

victors, and in an attempt to drive off the oncoming hosts, Garnier met with his death.

Even before this catastrophe, the Governor of Saigon, alarmed at Garnier's warlike proceeding, had despatched M. Philastre as commissioner to adjudicate on affairs in Tongking. M. Philastre was a man who, while fully recognising the importance of securing Tongking for France, was entirely opposed to the warlike proceedings of Garnier, and his first step was therefore to withdraw the French garrisons from the captured towns. This done, he made a treaty with the king by which the Red River was declared open to commerce; French consuls were to be appointed at specified places, to whom power was given to refuse permission to obnoxious Europeans to settle in the country; and the customs duties were to be reduced by one-half on all goods imported in French ships.

In no sense was there a protectorate proclaimed by this instrument; and the French Ambassador at Peking, when urged by the Governor of Cochin-China to assume the fact of a protectorate, in his communications with the Chinese Government replied, "*J'ai craint de m'avancer sur ce terrain brûlant, et dans la lettre que j'ai écrite au Prince Kung, en lui envoyant une copie du traité d'amitié du 15 mars, j'ai glissé sur cette question.*" So manifestly was this the case, that the French Government appointed M. Rivière to the command in Tongking, with special orders to make another and a more definite treaty. The capture of Hanoi and other towns in the delta of the Red River by this officer, and the subsequent disasters which overtook his force, ending in his own death at the hands of the enemy, are events too well

known to need recapitulation. Neither will it be necessary to mention more than the results of the operations of the last two years. The capture of the capital, Hué, by Admiral Courbet, followed quickly on the death of Rivière, and brought about a treaty which was sufficiently definite to satisfy the most exacting. The first clause ran: "Annam recognises the French protectorate, and binds herself to hold no communication with any foreign Powers except through the intermediary of the French resident at the Court of Hué."

Though this treaty was exacted at the point of the bayonet, and signed under pressure, the French proceeded to act on its provisions at once. The suppression of disorder and brigandage having been their professed motive for interfering in the affairs of Tongking, they advanced up the Red River and captured Sontay. It was plainly impossible that China could remain passive and see a kingdom which had been her vassal for many centuries overrun by a foreign Power; and after vigorously but in vain protesting against the outrages thus committed, she found herself compelled to take up arms in defence of her tributary. How the hostilities between the two Powers dragged on, how successes and disasters overtook each in turn, and how, finally, peace was made by China agreeing to recognise the French protectorate over Annam, are well known. The net result of it all is, that at the present moment France has incorporated into her dominions the whole littoral, extending upwards of two hundred miles in length, from the Chinese province of Kwang-tung to the frontier of Cambodia.

As we have already said, French

designs on Annam began in a desire to inflict a stab on the prosperity of England, and they were doubtless subsequently fostered by the reported mineral wealth of the country. Later investigations have, however, thrown considerable doubts on the value of the coal and other mines; and unquestionably the difficulty of getting at them is so great, that, under French auspices, their practical importance, even supposing them to be as rich as they were represented to be, amounts to very little. In fact, the invasion of Annam is another instance of the invincible habit which the French have of undertaking arduous and difficult campaigns with light hearts begotten of ignorance. To the politicians of the Boulevards, the conquest of a country defended by oriental soldiers appears to be a matter of easy accomplishment. But it never enters into their calculations that a country to be annexed must not only be conquered but must be held,—that though by a succession of daring dashes it may be possible to gain possession of fortresses with a handful of men, that handful may very readily melt away before repeated attacks made by overwhelming numbers. These lessons they seem incapable of taking to heart, and year after year they throw away the lives and treasure of their countrymen in such fruitless enterprises as the attacks on Madagascar and Annam, and the occupation of the banks of the Congo.

For the inhabitants of Great Britain, with rapidly increasing numbers and narrow limits of territory, colonies are absolutely necessary as homes for our surplus population. The want first made itself felt, and the acquisition of colonies followed in obedience to the natural law of supply and demand. But so far from

France being over-populated, great difficulty is found in some country districts to procure labourers for the cultivation of the soil; and so far from there being any natural desire on the part of Frenchmen to emigrate to French colonies, it was, as late as 1883, considered necessary by the Colonial Minister to bring in a bill for the loan of 2,000,000 francs to encourage emigration to Algeria, the nearest and best-liked of their dependencies. But there is no need to emphasise the fact that Frenchmen do not make good colonists. They lack that mixture of adventurous spirit and power of persevering industry which has enabled us to turn the virgin soils of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia into fruitful fields. They have not the courage to go out alone into new and untried regions, and they mope and sicken when they find themselves cut off from their friends and separated from their country. Statistics show that not more than 4000 emigrants leave the shores of France in a year, all of whom, with the exception of about 300 who go to Algeria, find their way to British colonies and the United States. This predilection for other dependencies than their own is to be accounted for in two ways. In the first place, the French colonies are ill chosen with regard to climate—the paddy-fields of Cochin-China and Annam, the rocky ravines of Madagascar, and the swamps of the Congo, being one and all eminently unsuited to the European constitution; and secondly, the inveterate tendency of the French official mind towards bureaucratic institutions results in the imposition on every newly acquired province of hosts of officials, who take a delight in justifying their existence by inflicting vexatious enactments and

petty annoyances on all who come under their sway.

And if, as we have seen, only some 300 emigrants visit Algeria, the best-favoured and the most easily accessible of the French colonies, what hope can there be for the success of such distant dependencies as Cochin-China and Annam? It is stated by Mr Scott, in his recent work 'France and Tongking,' that at the present time, after France has been in possession of the Cochin-Chinese provinces for three-and-twenty years, only one French mercantile firm is to be found at Saigon. It is a fact, also, that for the first eighteen months after the signature of the much-vaunted Franco-Annamese treaty of 1874, no French merchant-vessel entered the Red River. Eleven English ships, six German, and 116 Chinese availed themselves of the opening of the new ports, but not one French. But the climax is reached when we find that in Cochin-China the population declined from 1,597,013 in 1880, to 1,549,497 in 1883. On the other hand, the annual value of the imports and exports shows a slight tendency to increase. Thus, according to official returns, the imports in 1878 were of the value of 8,432,889 dollars, and four years later this amount had risen to 9,224,735 dollars. In the same way the exports within the same period crept up from 10,384,929 dollars to 11,812,415 dollars. Notoriously the colony is a constant drain on the Republican treasury; and unless in the future there should be a steady influx of emigrants from France, the outlay will have been found to have been incurred for the benefit of other nationalities alone. Among the resident French population, there is in common, with the population generally, a marked tendency towards numerical decline,

as is shown by the official statistics of 1880, from which we learn that in that year at Saigon there were 7 French marriages, 46 births, and 102 deaths.

Not only, however, do Frenchmen make bad colonists, but they everywhere fail to gain the confidence and enlist the co-operation of the natives over whom they assume rule. The French moral fibre is not strong enough to withstand the enervating and demoralising effect of debased oriental life. Instead of raising the natives to their own level, they fall to the level of the natives, and by this process they lose all title to respect, as well as all the influence for good which should attach to them as belonging to a higher and a Christian civilisation. With the loss of respect goes also the confidence of the natives in the justice and fair dealing of their conquerors, and the French have no other weapon than the chassepot with which to encounter the dislike and unwillingness to submit thus engendered. The result is that a permanent garrison of 4500 men is required to support the 1862 civil functionaries who govern Cochin-China; and in Tunis and Algeria, with a population of less than 3,000,000, an occupying force of 75,000 men is necessary for the preservation of peace. A comparison of these figures with the statistics of India, where with a population of 250,000,000, 50,000 British troops are held to be sufficient to protect the country from disorder and violence, illustrates the different effects produced on orientals by the objectless and tyrannical rule of France, and the wise and just government of England. Unfortunately, also, in moments of danger and excitement, the tiger element in the French character shows itself with terrible results; and the atrocious

cruelties of which soldiers fighting under the tricolour have at times been guilty in Algeria and Annam add enormously to the weight under which French rule has to struggle, and have left a legacy of hate which would take many years of even, just, and temperate government to obliterate from the minds of the people.

As colonies, Cochin-China and Annam, including Tongking, are and must remain valueless to France; but more than this, they are proving extremely costly. So eminently unsuited are their climates to the French constitution, that it is found impossible to keep soldiers in Annam for more than two years at a time, and it is now proposed to reduce this period to eighteen months. The constant passage to and fro of troops thus made necessary, entails an expenditure of money and men which forms not the least heavy tax which France has to pay for the glory of possessing colonies, and of establishing an empire in Asia.

At present the desire of inflicting a humiliation on England, which has been the mainspring of their Eastern policy, has made every burden appear light in the eyes of Frenchmen. By the establishment of a protectorate over Annam, they have gained a firm footing in the Indo-Chinese peninsula, and they will probably now advance a step further in prosecution of their ultimate design, by pushing on the diplomatic intrigues which have been brewing for some time in Cambodia, Siam, and Burmah. Already a *quasi* protectorate is claimed over Cambodia, and already attempts have been made to establish preponderating French interests both at Bangkok and Mandalay. Events will show how far the French Government is prepared to go in furtherance of the scheme, but it would be absurd in us to shut our eyes to the dangers which

this aggressive policy is likely to occasion to our influence and commerce in Indo-China. We may laugh at the idea of a French empire in the East as being chimerical, but much mischief may be done in attempting to establish it. It is doubtless true that eggs must be broken before an omelet can be made, but it is quite possible that a bad cook may break the necessary eggs and yet fail to produce an omelet. With Cambodia virtually French, with Siam bullied into compliance with French schemes, and with Burmah alienated from us, our trade in Indo-China would inevitably suffer, and we should find a second Afghanistan established on our eastern frontier, which, in time of war and of foreign complications, would be used as an instrument to plague us.

Fortunately the King of Siam is a man of wisdom and enlightenment, and is quite able to see clearly in which direction the true interests of his countrymen lie. He sees that, by developing the resources of his country and by educating his people, he may elevate it and them into a position which will enable him to hold his own against all comers. He sees that in the countries which, through weakness, have been compelled to yield to France, anarchy has succeeded to the rule, however imperfect, of the native sovereigns, and that trade has remained stationary. He sees clearly enough that France is stretching out her retractile claws in the direction of his country, and he looks to us to give him that legitimate support which will enable him to resist the encroachments with which he is threatened. It is to be feared that the fate of Cambodia is almost past

praying for; but Siam is still free, and might, if backed by the support which a firm line of policy on our part would supply, form a strong and definite barrier to the French advance. We are glad to see that the Manchester Chamber of Commerce is urging on the Indian Office the wisdom of extending railways in British Burmah, and of connecting that possession with Western China, through Siam and the Shan States. If these views prevail, not only will British trade be greatly benefited, but Siam will receive a substantial measure of the support she requires. But the present juncture is one to which the old proverb, "*Bis dat qui cito dat*," is eminently applicable. Events in the peninsula are marching apace, and all the quicker because the French undertakings in Cochin-China and Tongking have not been successful. A rapid, and, if possible, a victorious onward movement is likely to commend itself to the French commanders as the easiest way of obliterating the recollection of past errors. Though possibly this might temporarily accomplish the desired result, it would undoubtedly be doomed to ultimate failure, while the misery it would inflict on the native populations may be gauged by that already endured under like conditions by the people of Cochin-China and Tongking. In these circumstances the truest and best policy for us to pursue lies plainly before us. We should at once establish a firm alliance with the threatened States, and thus prevent any further extension of that system "colonisation" which has been justly described by M. Olemenc as "a series of crimes and operations."

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THE CRACK OF DOOM.—PART III.

CHAPTER XII.

COUNT RAMASSY, *alias* Tom Brockley, nowise disconcerted by his interview with his family; not in the least inclined to give up his lark; beginning, in fact, to really enjoy it as the enterprise became more complicated and difficult,—presented himself next morning soon after breakfast at Hugh Millerby's rooms. He had not given the comet papers to Professor Quickset after all. The happy thought had occurred to him of using them so as to give an air of reality to his assumed rank and interest in science.

Hugh hailed him as soon as he entered with a question about the symposium between bishops and men of science. He had thought about the scheme a good deal in the interval. How had it gone off?

So frank and ingratiating was the foreigner, that Hugh already treated him as an old and intimate acquaintance. Young men make

friendships quickly; and besides, there were the confidences that had passed between them to produce a rapid development of friendly feeling. The Count had told Hugh about his wife and his mission, and had asked his advice in important personal affairs. Hugh had in turn intrusted him with the papers about the comet. It was thus with something of the lively interest of a fellow-conspirator that Hugh awaited his report concerning a dinner intended to be the first move towards a great intellectual and moral reconstruction.

"It was very pleasant," was the report. "There was a great deal of talk, some of it very brilliant. They all seemed on their mettle. More than one of the company assured me privately, on saying good night, that they had never enjoyed a dinner-party more."

"But the cause?" interrogated Hugh, with a tendency to frivolous ridicule, that was considerably re-

pressed by the grave, almost dejected air with which the Count communicated his report. "Not much visible progress, I daresay."

"One could hardly expect it," sighed the Count. "The *rapprochement* must be gradual," he added, after a pause. "I am afraid you think it rather a desperate cause?"

"I don't know," said Hugh, evasively. "Everything must have a beginning."

"Confess, now," persisted the Count, "you think it absurd of a young man like me to try to make a revolution? Absurd and ridiculous—a very poor joke, in fact? What am I? A young man with a certain fortune, with no greater abilities than hundreds of other young men, with no standing in particular. Why should people listen to me, when I have nothing to propose but what has occurred to everybody as a highly desirable thing? If I were a member of a royal family, I might get a certain following as a well-disposed enthusiastic youth, ignorant of the world; but suppose I had told my guests last night my designs upon them, would they not have laughed in my face?"

Hugh felt rather ashamed of himself for having shown a disposition to treat the subject lightly, and did not very well know what to say in answer to these awkward questions. He could only stammer out the commonplace saying that every reformer must appear ridiculous at first, and that if people thought too much about their own insignificance, there never would be any progress. "As we agreed yesterday about swindlers, a reformer must look like anybody else when he begins. There is no obvious bump on his head, no flame flickering before his face, to proclaim him. At least it is not visible till he succeeds."

"It does seem the right thing to begin by making leading men on opposite sides personally known as men—as members of society—as social units,—does it not?" asked the Count, as if eager to have his companion's valued opinion. "Don't you think so? I am right so far?"

Thus appealed to, and taking the question in all seriousness, the good-natured Millerby searched for language in which, without hurting the enthusiast's feelings, he might convey an objection that had occurred to him. "I don't see, unless you had something to put before them as a basis of reconciliation, how——"

"Ah, I see," interrupted the Count; "I must have a programme." And he relapsed into gloom.

"The conversation, I suppose," hazarded Millerby, after a little, "did not run much on controverted topics last night?"

"No," replied the Count, rousing himself. "There was a good deal to say about your comet, however."

"Respectful or derisive?"

"Partly both. When I suggested that a century ago the announcement of such a comet would have caused immense excitement all through the country, Quickset laughed and said we were beyond that stage now. But Glenville, the editor of the 'Sphinx'——"

"So you had Glenville there too. I thought you were to have only bishops and scientists."

"One of the bishops disappointed me, so I asked Glenville, who was in the club, to join us. It was better, after all, to have one journalist, was it not? You know Glenville, I suppose. He seems a little erratic, but he holds his own brilliantly in conversation: extraordinary spirits he seems to have, and

yet he must work hard too. What a fortune for a man!"

"Yes, I know Glenville slightly. He is a member of the Junior Pantheon also."

"He told me he was to lunch there to-day."

"Well, but what did he say about the comet? He surely didn't venture to contradict Quickset on his own ground?"

"Oh yes, he did. Want of courage, I should say, is not his weak point. He did not exactly contradict Quickset, but he chaffed him rather effectively about the dogmatism of men of science, and nearly succeeded in making Quickset angry, which seemed to afford him great delight."

"And the bishops? This must have been nuts for them. But I beg your pardon, you don't understand our slang."

"I think I know what you mean. A *bonne bouche*, is it not? Yes. They seemed to take an unholy pleasure in the troubles of their enemy. I thought it prudent to change the conversation after a little."

We, who know more about Count Ramassy than Hugh Millerby did at the time, may wonder at the latter's stupidity, because it never occurred to him to doubt whether the dinner, of which the pretended Count gave him further circumstantial particulars, ever really took place. The thought never crossed his mind. Should we have been more suspicious in the circumstances? Possibly; but the fact is, that when Hugh's suspicions afterwards were aroused, and he tried to make out how much truth there was in the story, he could not quite satisfy himself. There could be no doubt that the Count had been a temporary member of the Pantheon. Incidentally, Hugh found out that both Glenville

and Quickset had dined there that evening in his company. How many bishops and other scientific men sat at the same table he never inquired; but finding that at least one bishop and an aspirant to that dignity had heard the conversation about the comet, he was inclined to believe that the adventurer had actually succeeded in his daring hospitality.

When the Count had answered all Hugh's questions as to what passed at the dinner, he began to say that he had a confession to make, if Hugh would promise not to be angry. "I wonder if you can forgive me? I have taken a great liberty and made a very stupid and annoying blunder. I can't think how I did it. You will not forgive me, I fear."

"Let us hear it. It can't be anything so very unpardonable."

"After the dinner, Quickset and Glenville both came up and asked me for your brother's papers—both with an eye to business. But really," he broke off, with a deprecating smile, "I am afraid to tell you."

"What can it have been?" said Hugh, not a little puzzled. "Did you make a mortal enemy of Quickset by giving the papers to the editor for publication, when he wanted to have them all to himself?"

"I had better make a clean breast of it. I couldn't give either of them the papers, because I hadn't got them. And that is not the worst of it. I hadn't even the positions of the comet."

"Forgot to put them into your dress clothes?"

"That could easily have been remedied. But the truth is, after I left you last evening, it occurred to me that I should still be in time for the foreign mail with an extra stamp, and I posted all the papers

at once to my assistant. It was a great liberty, but he is a very clever mathematician, and I thought his verification might be useful."

"You hadn't time, I suppose, to make a note of the positions?"

"I telegraphed them to my place, and thought I could carry them in my memory, which I can generally trust for figures. But I found when I tried, that I could only remember that the comet was somewhere in the region of the Great Bear. The hurry and the bustle of the dinner, I suppose, drove it out of my head. Now I throw myself on your mercy."

"There's no great harm done. You have only prevented Quickset from doing anything last night, and I daresay he is too busy with his address for the British Association to take much trouble with anything else just at present. I can telegraph at once to my brother for the positions."

"How very good of you!" cried the Count. "The very thing I came to ask. I am to meet Quickset at Miss Douglas's this afternoon, and Glenville at lunch at the Junior Pantheon, and I promised to get the positions for them. I have wired also to my assistant to wire them back, but of course the double transmission would increase the risk of error, and it would be safer if we could get them from your brother."

The mention of meeting Quickset at Miss Douglas's struck rather a sensitive place in Hugh's memory, and he covered the pain by starting up quickly with a "Let us go and telegraph at once."

As they sallied down to the telegraph office at the foot of St James's Street, Hugh said to his companion, "*Apropos* of religion and science, I believe you would have no difficulty in getting bishops and scientific agnostics to meet and

chat about indifferent topics in the most friendly way—to put them on the best of social terms, as, in fact, many of them already are; but all the time the bishops would keep themselves perfectly uncommitted as officials of the Church, and the agnostics would not bate one atom of their intellectual scorn for the believers in theological dogma."

"But why have any dogma?"

"Why have any dogma? It depends on what you mean by dogma. You can't have an organised Church without a certain definite body of common opinion. And this is my difficulty to your scheme of reconciliation. There would have to be many additions to the present formulas, as well as many subtractions from them, before your bishops and your agnostics could join hands in public worship."

"I have sometimes thought," said the Count, thoughtfully, "that a basis might be found in music."

The speaker's manner was impressive, and Millerby restrained an impulse to treat the subject jocularly.

"We do seem to be feeling for a common basis in that direction," he said, after a pause. "But don't you think that after a time dispute might be as hot over hymns and tunes, and the moral effects of various styles of music, as it has ever been over transubstantiation and eternal punishment? What a change it would make in the training of the clergy! The conditions of promotion, too—Sir Arthur Sullivan, for example, a bishop!"

They had reached the telegraph office. As Hugh was writing out his telegram, an idea suddenly struck him, and he turned round and asked—"By the way, couldn't

we get the form that you gave in last night? That would give us the positions at once, wouldn't it? I wonder it didn't occur to us before."

"It did occur to me," said the Count, promptly; "but it is no good. Once a telegram is handed in, it is like a letter dropped

into the box. You can't get it back."

"Suppose we try. Shall I ask the girl?"

"It was not here that I gave in the telegram, but at Charing Cross, and I went there first thing this morning. I thought as you do, till I tried."

CHAPTER XIII.

It was arranged that the reply should be sent to the Junior Pantheon, and that Hugh and the Count should go and lunch there, and wait till the reply came.

As they walked up, the Count suddenly paused, and after a moment's thought, said, "I don't like practical jokes, especially on serious subjects, but it strikes me that the world would be none the worse for a little scare about this comet. It would set people seriously thinking about the foundations of their principles of action to give them a good fright."

The excitable and mercurial Millerby caught rather eagerly at this suggestion. "By Jove!" he said, "it would set them thinking seriously if they believed that they were all doomed to perish by fire in three weeks! The effect would be really worth observing."

"Yes; you would have an opportunity of making many notes for your novels," remarked the Count.

"How do you know about my novels?" asked Millerby, laughing, and too full of the new idea to care for the involuntary touch of satire in his friend's tone.

"Miss Douglas told me something about your plans," answered the Count. "But what would interest me in the experiment," he gravely continued, "would be to see the mutual attitude of science

and religion in such an emergency."

"No doubt that would be most interesting," assented Millerby. "Science would be at a tremendous disadvantage in the circumstances, however. The orthodox who have had to endure the taunts of science for years, and even to make concessions, would be sorely tempted to take revenge."

"There would be a great commotion, I have no doubt," said the Count.

"Would you expect a wholesale conversion of agnostics, or a wholesale massacre perhaps? We should certainly see what agnosticism was made of as well as orthodox piety."

"I should not expect the panic to take any definite shape, but good might come of it when it was all over. It would test the ethical value of all creeds. And it would drive agnostics to search for ethical foundations. At present they can content themselves with simple negation, because society is held together by religious organisation."

"But," said Hugh, after a pause, "would exceptional circumstances like that really be a fair test of a creed?"

"Unquestionably," replied the Count, "just as a panic is a test of the soundness of the commercial system. A system that can't bear the strain of a panic is unsound."

There is always a tendency to drift into unsound trading, and it needs the consideration of what might happen in a panic to keep men straight. Now in moral matters this consideration would be forced upon the thoughtful, if there was an immediate prospect of a sudden termination of the whole human race as far as this world is concerned."

"But would you get people to believe it?" cried Hugh. "That is what I doubt. The great mass of the people would never believe that the world was really coming to an end till everything round them was in a blaze. Even if they heard the archangel's trump, they would think it was merely a peal of thunder, and hardly raise their heads from their everyday business."

"You are judging, I imagine, from your own state of mind."

"True, it may be."

"How far is that general? To what extent has scientific explanation of natural phenomena taken hold of the mass of the people? That is what I should like to know."

"The comet would undoubtedly test that," said Hugh, ruminating.

They had now reached the door of the club. The Count stopped Hugh for a minute to say, "I don't like practical jokes, as I said; but what would be the harm in our getting up a little excitement about this comet? We might make it a bit of a mystery, you know, by keeping back the ascertained positions and letting the astronomers search for it for a night or two."

"Well, we shall see what can be done," said Hugh with a laugh, and they went into the club.

"As luck will have it," whis-

pered Millerby as they entered the hall, "Glenville is in the club. I hear his voice in the dining-room. Let us begin with him."

Glenville saluted the Count cheerfully with "Any more news of our destroyer?"

"Mr Millerby has just telegraphed, and we have come here to wait for the reply."

"What is this riddle, Millerby?" asked a pleasant-faced man who sat at the same table, and had been chatting with Glenville before they came in. Mr O'Connor was a popular *habitué* of the club, a willing and fluent converser capable of adding his mite upon any subject that might be started. Some of his literary friends knew that he acted as London correspondent for a group of provincial newspapers.

Millerby explained that a comet had been sighted, which, if it continued to move in the same direction as at present, would infallibly hit the earth.

O'Connor was, of course, amused at the contingency. A cool club dining-room in July, and the presence of easy *poco curante* companions, are not favourable conditions for the disclosure of a remote menace of tragic catastrophe. The cheerful Irishman did not take the comet seriously. He was the possessor of many scraps of out-of-the-way antiquarian lore, and he at once proceeded to give curious facts about the comets of the past.

"I suppose the last great comet-scare was that about the time of the South Sea Bubble. Did you ever read Arbuthnot's skit on it—how the stockbrokers bought Bibles and gave away huge sums in charity, and how crowds assembled in Cheapside to pray till the hour was past at which the catastrophe was expected, and then went and

got drunk, and otherwise made up for lost time?"

"They would do just the same now, if they were thoroughly frightened," said Hugh, with gravity.

"Yes, if they were frightened. That's just the difference. Would they be frightened? Not a bit of it. There's not a collier, or a costermonger, or a workhouse pauper between Land's End and John-o'-Groat's that would not laugh at the idea of being afraid of a comet."

"What does the collier or the costermonger know about it?" asked Glenville. "What does the fairly instructed schoolboy know about it?"

"Not much, I daresay; but they know that it is a ridiculous superstition to expect any harm from comets. That is enough for them."

"They would be afraid, if they were told to be afraid," retorted Glenville. "Where there is no personal knowledge, there can be no stability of conviction."

"An argument in favour of extended elementary education," interposed the Count.

"But who would tell them to be afraid?" asked O'Connor, triumphantly. "They have not much respect for the parson as it is, unfortunately; but if he were to tell them, they would put their tongues in their cheeks at once, and grin over it as the stalest of tricks to get money for the poor's-box, or frighten them out of their beer, or their sports, or their bad habits of swearing."

"Why not one of themselves?" suggested Glenville. "A converted prize-fighter or wife-beater, or some such leader of popular opinion."

"They would nickname him Comet for the rest of his life. That would be all. Nothing more

would come of it, unless the old Adam were to break out in the convert, and he were to maim or murder some boy for shouting, 'What about the Comet?' after him in the street."

There was a laugh at this, and then Millerby inquired, "How do you suppose that people have got to be so firmly convinced? It is not so long ago since every conspicuous comet made a panic."

"Well," answered O'Connor, after a moment's reflection, "I suppose it's the Newtonian astronomy."

"But the mass of people know very little about that."

"They believe what they are told. I grant you that if the astronomers had not been agreed among themselves—if they had been split into sects and schools—the case would have been different. When one comes to think of it, it is a remarkable instance of the readiness of the lower classes to accept the opinions of their betters. But about the fact there can be no doubt. Comets are played out."

All Glenville's love of paradox was up in arms at O'Connor's dogmatism. He determined at once to press the dogmatist a little closer.

"But have we, after all, good reason to be so cocksure that comets are harmless?"

"I don't know that we have," chimed in Millerby, with a comic look of intelligence at the Count. "We don't know much about them."

"We know this much at least," returned O'Connor, "that stars have been seen through them, and that we have actually passed through one without being a penny the worse. What more would you have? They are merely congregations of vapours, with nothing pestilent about them. They can

no more destroy the earth than they can produce famines or plagues or historical monsters."

"You put your case too strongly," said Millerby. "It is only through the *tails* of them that stars have been seen, and only through the *tail* of one that the earth is *supposed* to have passed in 1861. For all that we know, a collision with the nucleus might put an end to us."

"The difference between a butt and a slap, you see, O'Connor, is considerable," said the alert Glenville, much pleased to find Gallio brought to book. "They are like niggers, their fighting strength is in their head."

"Well, Glenville," retorted O'Connor, "you just try to get a rise out of the British public with a comet, and you'll find out the worth of your theories. The astronomers will be down on you to a man."

"My dear fellow, I have no theories. I only think that your astronomers are a little too cocksure about theirs."

"Try a fall with them," said the scoffer.

"You know something about astronomy, don't you?" said Glenville to Millerby.

"Yes; I used to potter at it a good deal."

"Well, if Millerby will write the article, and you will back us up with your London correspondence, O'Connor, I don't mind if I do try a fall with them."

"I can't engage," said O'Connor, "to back you up beyond drawing attention to your article as the latest example of Cockney excitability. It will be a splendid text for the provincial editor to contrast the solid judgment of the country with the craziness of the metropolitan journalist."

"All right. As long as you

draw attention to the article, I don't care what you say."

"I might get one of the evening papers to quote it," O'Connor suggested. "I am willing to give you every advantage, you see."

"Can you let me have the article in time for Saturday, Millerby?" said the editor. "You needn't trouble much about the form. I will lick it into shape, if it wants anything. The idea is to insist upon the practical test to which Nature is about to subject the theories of astronomers. I would do it myself, only my hands are full for this week."

Millerby undertook to have the article at the 'Sphinx' office next morning.

They rose now for an adjournment to the smoking-room. The only auditor of their chat and chaff was a tall handsome young man with an eye-glass, who was lunching alone at an adjoining table. Him O'Connor addressed with scoffing words, as they rose.

"I say, Graham, Glenville intends to wake us up in the dull season with a comet. You might help him by putting a question to the Government whether they are aware that a comet has been discovered—er—in a position threatening to the safety of this planet, you know,—and what steps, if any, they propose to take in consequence. It might damage them with the country, you know, and identify them still more with Bradlaugh and the agnostics, if they were sceptical."

"I'll think over it," drawled Graham, with unmoved gravity, at which answer they laughed and retired.

The answer to Hugh's telegram was that his brother Stephen had left home for London on the business of the forthcoming British Association meeting at Norport.

"This is unfortunate," said Hugh to the editor. "My brother is not at home, and we can't get the exact position of the comet."

"That doesn't matter in the least for the article. I leave such minutiae to the 'Serapeum.' I daresay Raspian would not touch it till he had the exact right ascen-

sion and declination, or whatever you call it. That is all very well for the 'Transactions of the Royal Society,' but it is not journalism."

So it was agreed that the article should be written all the same; and Hugh went to his rooms for the purpose, while Count Ramassymade his way to the studio of Miss Douglas.

CHAPTER XIV.

While our friends were lunching at the Junior Pantheon, Miss Douglas had lunched with her companion Mrs Smith, and was now in her studio, chatting over her after-luncheon tobacco, which she took in the form of cigarettes. Miss Douglas did not mind in the least that there should be an odour of tobacco-smoke in her studio when her visitors arrived. She made no secret of the fact that she liked a cigarette, and she smoked a good many.

This emancipated young lady's respectability-wrapper, as she called Mrs Smith in her merry fits,—a harmless necessary addition to the establishment,—was a timid, frightened, sympathetic soul, the widow of a doctor, who had left her very ill provided for. If Mrs Brockley complained of the neglected state of mother to a woman of genius, Mrs Smith had much more reason to complain of her position as humble chaperon. Hugh Millerby was the only person with whom she felt at ease in this higher society into which she had been lifted in her middle age, the only person who recognised her existence without effort visible to her suspicious eyes. For though Mrs Smith never complained at having to sit silent, neglected, and vacantly smiling, she was a close observer, and when she had known Miss Douglas for some months,

fairly surprised her with humorous mimicry of her distinguished acquaintances,—mimicry without the slightest bitterness, mimicry in the gentlest vein of humour; for poor Mrs Smith was too broken-spirited to be capable even of feeling resentment. Besides Miss Douglas, Millerby and her friend Miss Quickset were the only persons aware of her peculiar gift.

Mrs Smith was uneasy at the prospect of visitors, and was nervously trying to read one of Jane Marjoram's novels. She meant to display it ostentatiously when Mrs Rorke came, to conciliate the novelist, and perhaps lead up to a little conversation with her.

There was no appearance of nervous apprehension about Miss Douglas. She was lounging in a very easy gentlemanlike attitude, with one leg over the arm of a chair, talking over the characters of her acquaintances between the puffs of her cigarette. This kind of talk—generally humorous with a sub-acid flavour, for the lady had a real interest in the comedy of life—was one of her favourite occupations. Mrs Smith was a most appreciative listener, and sometimes ventured on a timid echo or illustration.

The strange Count had been the last subject. "I wonder if he really knows twenty-seven languages," Miss Douglas was saying,

as she swung her leg meditatively. "What can they be? Why should anybody learn twenty-seven languages?"

"He is very complimentary to everybody in his conversation," said Mrs Smith, softly. She had seen him at Quickset's when she had been there with her charge. He had not spoken to her unobtrusive self; but lookers-on see most of the game, and she had been struck by a certain appearance of system in the Count's quiet efforts to please.

"I wish I had got a little more out of him about Mr Darby Rorke," said Miss Douglas, remembering how abruptly the Count had put aside that topic of conversation at Raspian's. "He quite snubbed me. There was something in his manner that intimated in an offensive way that he knew I was curious on the subject, and that he declined to gratify me. Not that it matters a pennypiece to me who her husband is, but I don't like to be put off. I must draw M. le Comte another time. I wonder what newspaper Mr Rorke writes for, or if he writes for a newspaper at all."

"Doesn't it strike you as strange that he should have known Mr Darby Rorke, without knowing that his wife writes novels?"

"I don't think there is much in that," said Miss Douglas, after thinking for the space of a long pull at her cigarette, and slowly emitting the smoke thus accumulated. "But there is something mysterious about this Count. Did I tell you what Bob told me this morning, that he has been in the City about a company for developing the mineral wealth of Bosnia, or something of that sort? The curious thing is, that a Mr Rorke has something to do with it. He

has a concession from the Austrian Government."

The experience of the late Dr Smith in companies had not been fortunate, and Mrs Smith habitually regarded all persons connected with such things as rogues and swindlers. "Very suspicious indeed, my dear," was her comment on this news. "I thought——"

"Oh, the concession is all square," Bob says. Bob was Miss Douglas's City brother. "They want Douglas & Son to be the auditors. But I think this accounts for his not wishing to say much about Mr Rorke. Perhaps he knows more about Mrs Rorke, too, than he pretends to. She turned pale when she saw him yesterday. I felt sure it was at him, though he turned it off by pretending that it was at me. You just keep your eye on them this afternoon."

"He has a very cruel mouth," remarked Mrs Smith.

"Determined enough for anything. That's the sort of man I admire,—not a soft and purring tame cat like Millerby, who scratches like a cat, too, if you hurt him."

Before Mrs Smith could interpose a word in defence of her favourite, Miss Douglas continued, "It was better than any play to see Millerby and old Quickset yesterday. Poor Grace looked so sat upon."

She laughed merrily at the reminiscence, and almost let her cigarette out. "I say, it would be a good joke! Serve him right for being such a weak-headed spoon."

Mrs Smith looked inquiringly. "What is it now, my dear?"

Miss Douglas made no immediate answer, but seized a bit of paper and a pen, and began making a rapid sketch. "What do you think of that?" she asked, when it

was finished, handing it to Mrs Smith.

It was a sketch of a dove carrying in its bill a curiously folded letter, bearing the simple superscription—"Hope!"

"I don't understand," said Mrs Smith, as Miss Douglas resumed her easy attitude in the chair, and continued to snigger mischievously. "What are you going to do with it?"

"Send it to Millerby. I will get Grace to post it from her district. He will think it comes from her, and make a fool of himself accordingly."

"But the handwriting?"

"I will print the address," said Miss Douglas—and taking an envelope, proceeded to do this, and to enclose the sketch.

Mrs Smith looked almost tearful. She thought of a certain anonymous letter, which the reader may remember was received by Mrs Millerby at Hardhill, and trembled with all the timidity of a scrupulous nature. "Oh, Fanny, I wish you wouldn't do those things. It's very dangerous, you know. I don't think a lady should do such things."

"Stuff!" said Fanny, closing her envelope; "it's a very good joke."

A knock was heard at the door, and Miss Douglas hastened to assume a more decorous attitude. "There's no harm in it, old Mother Propriety," she said, patting Mrs Smith on the head. "Don't you look so lugubrious about it." And she turned to receive Count Ramassy.

CHAPTER XV.

Miss Douglas's last picture stood on the easel, and before the arrival of any other visitor she had time to show the Count others that were in the studio, as well as photographs of some of her earlier productions. The Count followed the exhibition with grave interest, looking much impressed but saying little.

"Now," she said, when the last had been shown, "you have seen them all. It's very good-natured of you not to have yawned once through the whole show. I'm sure I have bored you enough for one afternoon."

"On the contrary," replied the Count. "I always like to see the whole of an artist's work, more particularly when there is such a unity of character in it as there is in yours."

This was in allusion to the fact that nearly all Miss Douglas's subjects were children, and their pets and playthings.

"Monotony, you mean?" said she, in somewhat sharp and defiant tones.

"Not at all. A genuine artist can secure much greater real variety by working in a limited field. And I could not conceive any field more delightful, or," he added, after pausing for a moment,—"excuse me—more honourable to the woman's heart of the painter." A sadness came over the Count's face as he spoke.

Nothing is more pleasing than to get credit for virtues which we are doubtful of possessing. Miss Douglas's worst enemy could not with justice have accused her of mawkish sentiment. But the compliment struck home, though she answered with an affectation of indifference—

"Oh, I took up child-painting for purely practical reasons. In the first place, it is easier for me as a spinster to get models. And

in the second place, child-pictures are sure to sell in dear domesticated England."

"Don't do yourself injustice. You English are a very warm-hearted people, though for some reason it pleases you to be shy of admitting it."

"If you mean that fondness for animals and children is a sign of warmth of heart, an acquaintance of mine, Mr Millerby, whom I think you have met, was only the other day maintaining the opposite. He considers it a sign of heartlessness towards grown-up people—of heartlessness and soured affections,—an allotropic form of extreme selfishness, I think he called it."

"That is a very fantastic paradox."

"Mr Millerby holds that it is a scientific truth. He deduces it from the law of conservation of energy. Given a limited quantity of the energy of the system to be spent in affection, the more you give to the lower animals, the less you have for grown-up people."

"How very whimsical!" said the Count, in an indifferent tone, contemplating earnestly the painter's last production. The subject was a cat dozing on a chair, and a pretty mirthful-looking girl reaching at it from behind the back of the chair, with intent apparently to nip its tail. Her arm was cautiously advanced, her face lighted up with mischievous expectation. "Flirtation" was the title of the picture.

"I think this last picture of yours a decided advance on the others that I have seen. You have there given a true revelation of child-life."

"And the straight lines of the chair give value to the soft graceful curves of the girl and the cat, don't they?" added she, mockingly. "I see that you are an art

critic, monsieur, in addition to your other accomplishments. But it is a revelation of a very disagreeable phase of child-life, if Mr Millerby is right in another of his nice little paradoxes, that children are naturally cruel. He was good enough to say that he never knew what children were till he had seen my pictures, that he would always look at them henceforward through my spectacles, that I had poisoned his mind against them, with many other compliments of the same left-handed kind."

"Oh, but you know," broke in good Mrs Smith, "Mr Millerby is really a great admirer of your pictures. That is only his fun."

"I agree with him that children are naturally cruel," said the Count. "Only," he added, in a meaning voice, going up closer to the picture, "I don't draw the line at children."

Miss Douglas looked at him sharply. What did the man mean? Was it flirtation? If it was not, the remark was irrelevant and meaningless to the point of drivel; if it was, it had not been properly led up to—it was violent, forced, clumsy, and crude. The lady was sufficiently experienced to have an eye to artistic merit in the art. She had been trained in a good school. Her good looks and her strikingly independent and eccentric position had brought her many lovers of a certain type, middle-aged gentlemen, exiles, travelling artists, and antiquaries, who had wives at home, and felt their way with practised delicacy and tact. A pretty dance on the ice Miss Douglas had led many a middle-aged Lothario, and many a one she had left floundering in situations of exasperating and ridiculous ignominy. She generally had one or more affairs of the kind on hand. It was one of the amusements of

her life,—a dangerous amusement, no doubt, but danger had its charms for this self-reliant and wilful person.

She looked at the Count sharply, and with a rising sense of contempt. He had fallen for the moment in her estimation. "I don't quite see the point of that remark," she said, in a dry tone.

Even before she spoke, the Count was aware that he had made a false step. It was not easy to make a conquest of the cool intellect of Miss Douglas. Her alertness and want of sympathy had disconcerted him in his rôle of disconsolate widower and grave humanitarian. She had the advantage over him that Cassius would have had over Brutus if Brutus had been a sham. She diffused an atmosphere around her in which sentimental hypocrisy found it difficult to live. But the Count, though disconcerted for a moment, made a desperate effort to regain the rails off which he had by inadvertent impulse so foolishly jerked himself.

He turned from the picture, and faced Miss Douglas with a steady eye, saying in measured tones, into which he tried to throw an accent of sad surprise, "The remark is unhappily applicable to human beings in general. There is a great deal of pure cruelty in the world."

"I am glad that my poor picture should have been the means of suggesting so profound a reflection."

"Don't you believe that there is such a thing as disinterested malevolence in human nature?"

The arrival of Professor Quickset and his daughter interrupted the deliverance of Miss Douglas on this difficult question, and gave the Count time to recover himself. There was another exhibition of the pictures, the artist modestly protesting that though it was very good of Mr Quickset to come, and

though she fully appreciated the honour of a visit from so busy a man, she was half inclined to wish she had not asked him, seeing that he knew so much about pictures and was so severe a judge. "But you will promise not to be too hard to please?"

"I will make no concessions to friendship. I will do my duty as a critic," said the astronomer, gaily, "if Mrs Smith will be good enough to give me a cup of tea."

The astronomer was quite in holiday humour, and pleasantly told the artist, after the inspection of the pictures, that she was "getting on."

"Count Ramassy thinks my last a decided advance. I hope you agree with him."

Quickset cast towards him an impressed look, as much as to say, "So you know about pictures too;" and the Count hastened to disclaim any special knowledge of art, only this picture pleased him more than the others, and he would be glad to be the possessor of it, if it was not already disposed of.

"You are perfectly right," said the astronomer, authoritatively; "the left-hand corner is perhaps a little empty. I don't know that I wouldn't have a terrier there, watching the operation."

"Excellent!" cried Miss Douglas; "you are really doing your duty as a critic."

"Ready to bark as soon as the cat should start up," suggested the Count.

They all agreed that the Count entered thoroughly into the spirit of Mr Quickset's suggestion. Mrs Smith was a little fluttered by the greatness of the company, but the scene appealed to her quiet sense of humour as she anticipated the ridicule that the inwardly incensed artist would cast upon the idea when they were alone.

"Isn't the cat lovely?" cried

Miss Quickset, darting forward and kneeling in front of the picture. "Such an image of content! It does seem cruel to disturb it."

"I have just been telling Count Ramassy Mr Millerby's opinion that children are naturally cruel."

Quickset glanced uneasily at his daughter, who covered her confusion by moving off to the photographs on a table in the corner. "That young man," he said quietly, "will change a good many of his opinions before he is many years older."

"Perhaps he has some reason for this particular opinion, and

would be glad to have reason for changing it," said Miss Douglas, with a dry smile, to Mrs Smith. Miss Quickset heard the remark and coloured, as she rummaged among the photographs with trembling hand. "There! that is my favourite," she cried to the Count, who had followed her.

Miss Douglas watched the nervous movement with an amused light in her eyes, and turning to the astronomer, engaged him in conversation about the existence of a principle of pure malevolence in the human breast. She disputed it warmly.

CHAPTER XVI.

Professor Quickset and Miss Douglas were still engaged in discussing the constitution of the natural man, and battling gaily over cases of apparent delight in the infliction of pain for its own sake—of course upon others—with good Mrs Smith as an audience of the keen encounter of wits, when Mrs Darby Rorke was announced.

Miss Douglas's curiosity as to the relations between this lady and the Count had not been diminished by his blundering attempt at a flirtation with herself. That such was his intention she could not doubt. His endeavour to give the silly remark about cruelty a different turn had not misled her. There was no mistaking the original tone. The spoken word cannot be brought back, however many other words are sent after it to keep it out of harm's way. "I must keep an eye on this inconsolable widower," Miss Douglas had said to herself. "My revelation of child-life is not the only revelation that has been made this afternoon. He is not quite the saint that he seems."

While, therefore, she welcomed Mrs Rorke with effusion, she kept the tail of her eye on Count Ramassy.

For this fictitious nobleman the meeting with his sister was a severe trial of his histrionic powers. He was not altogether unprepared for it, though it came upon him rather suddenly. In arranging her little party the day before, which she did after her curiosity was inflamed by Mrs Rorke's change of colour at sight of the Count, and the Count's personal knowledge of Mr Rorke, Miss Douglas had not told Mrs Rorke that she was to meet the Count, nor the Count that he was to meet Mrs Rorke. The inquisitive woman wished to watch the effect of an unexpected encounter.

As it happened, both were partially on their guard, the occurrences of the previous day having warned them of the possibility of another meeting. For Mrs Rorke the difficulty lay in this, that she had not been able to make up her mind what to do if they should meet again. She shrank from making a scene by charging her

own brother with being an impostor. On the other hand, she felt that if she tried to treat him as a stranger, introduced to her for the first time, she made herself almost an accomplice in his deception, whatever might be the object of it. If he could only be persuaded to go away! This, as her mother had again and again repeated, would be the best solution. Mrs Brockley had undertaken to persuade him to this, if in the meantime Mrs Rorke would promise to do nothing rash.

The Count, of course, was under the necessity of accommodating his action to hers, and thus was in a position of greater uncertainty, though not of equal misery. He was outwardly calm enough, but his pulsation was decidedly quickened as he stood with Miss Quickset by the little side-table turning over and commenting on the photographs of the painter's achievements, inwardly thanking his stars that he had taken the precaution of seeing Mrs Rorke last night. What would she do now? Would she recognise him? He was holding himself ready with desperate composure for whatever might emerge, as Miss Quickset, eagerly and nervously, still a little distracted by the mention of Millerby's name, pointed out the beauties of her friend's art. Perhaps she would simply ignore him!

This, in fact, seemed to be what Mrs Rorke had decided on; for, not unobserved by her hostess, she had taken a chair with her back to him, and was being attended to with tea and ready conversation by the gallant astronomer.

Should he boldly remind her that he had been introduced yesterday at Raspian's?

He could hardly avoid it, for presently Miss Quickset left him to speak to Mrs Rorke and listen to the conversation between her

father and that lady. The girl loved and admired her father. Always affectionate to his children, he had petted and caressed her more than usual since she had shown signs of rebellion in the affair of Millerby; and though she was hurt by his slighting mention of that young man a few minutes ago, affection soon triumphed over her sense of injustice. His kind look and smile, as she returned to listen to him with filial pride, restored her to happiness again.

Left thus stranded among the photographs, the Count quickly made up his mind. Waiting for a pause in the conversation, he advanced to Mrs Rorke, and claimed to have been introduced to her before.

Mrs Rorke bowed coldly, and the Count said something about the privilege of meeting her. "We all read your works," he said, pointing to the volume with which Mrs Smith was trying to catch the novelist's eye. "I read this in a Tauchnitz edition on my way to London."

Mrs Rorke answered this with a faint smile, which by a stranger would have been attributed to the embarrassment of a modest author, and the Count continued with fluent politeness. "I think your heroine charming; but if I may be pardoned for saying so, I think you paint your villain a little too black. It is hardly in nature that he could have behaved so badly to such a woman as you describe."

Mrs Rorke coloured just perceptibly, and made answer that she was afraid she was a bad hand at defending herself. Then she looked as if she would like to resume her conversation with Mr Quickset.

Miss Douglas was inwardly delighted with her own astuteness. All her suspicions were confirmed by Mrs Rorke's embarrassment.

The man of science, on the other hand, saw nothing in the novelist's manner but a shy disinclination to discuss her own works in company, and gallantly came to the rescue.

"We can never expect the two sexes to agree about heroines and villains," he said. "But I have just been trying to frighten the ladies about your comet. Have you got those positions we were talking of last night?"

The Count explained that they had telegraphed to Hardhill, but that Mr Millerby's brother was not at home—was, in fact, on his way to London in connection with the meeting of the British Association.

"That is a pity," observed Quickset, "for we have very few nights now till the Association meets, and I am afraid I shall not have time to make a search. There has been a hitch in the arrangements for evening lectures, and it has been coolly suggested that I should fill the gap."

"I do hope you will consent," exclaimed Miss Douglas. "I should go to the meeting myself if you did." It occurred to this satirist of her sex that she might find some materials among the female members of the gathering.

"Do, papa," chimed in Miss Quickset. "He is taking me," she added, proudly, to Mrs Rorke. "I have never heard papa lecture."

"I also hope to have the pleasure of hearing you," said Mrs Rorke, glad to escape from her uneasy speculations as to the pretended Count's connection with the comet. She wondered whether this was part of his deception, and what could be the object of it.

"I have consented," said the man of science, pleased as mere man could not but be with this unanimous flutter of interest. "And if I had not, how could I have resisted this most influential petition?

If you would also be good enough to find me a subject——"

"Any subject!" exclaimed Miss Douglas. "You must have hundreds of subjects."

"Any subject!" echoed Miss Quickset, delightedly.

"Any subject!" came as a fainter echo from Mrs Smith.

"Why not take comets?" suggested the Count. "The subject would be opportune. Not that you want that, of course."

Quickset threw back his head and mused.

"Pity I am not near my observatory," said the Count. "I might find it for you at once. I know generally where to look."

"My observatory!" thought poor Mrs Rorke. "Then he is pretending to be what he is not." She knew that there were astronomical instruments in the house where he acted as tutor, because she had heard of his star-gazing in his letters. Apparently he was passing himself off as the master of this establishment. What could be his object?

"If you care to use my instruments," said the astronomer, cordially, "you are very welcome to them."

This was what the Count had been fishing for, but he professed unwillingness to tamper with instruments so valuable as Professor Quickset's must be. "I am but a bungling amateur."

"I am not afraid," said Quickset. "Grace will help you if you like. She knows all about them. Come up to-night, and I will give you a start myself. It will be a favour to me."

When this had been arranged, Mrs Rorke, to fill a pause in the conversation, asked whether there was any real danger in comets. "Not the slightest," said the astronomer, and proceeded to discourse about comets in general. The Count

drew Miss Douglas aside, under pretence of looking again at her pictures, and remarked to her in a low voice—

"How very sensitive authors are about their books!"

"What makes you say so?" She waited with malicious curiosity for his answer. "He is trying to put me off the scent," she thought.

"Did you not observe how annoyed Mrs Rorke looked when I hinted that I did not consider her villain as successful as her heroine? It was very stupid of me, was it not? One never knows the right thing to say on these occasions. I could not help remembering how pale she turned when she saw you—the dreaded critic—yesterday. But I suppose I oughtn't to have said it, ought I?"

"I don't see why you shouldn't, if you think it. I never feel sore when anybody cuts up my pictures."

"Well," said the Count, "I can't believe that such an unmitigated, unscrupulous villain as—I forget his name—Mrs Rorke's villain, you know,—is within the bounds of probability."

"She may have had experience of them," observed Miss Douglas, significantly.

The Count gave a slight start, which was not lost upon his interlocutor. "There is certainly something between them," she thought. But he quickly regained command of himself. He looked at Mrs Rorke with fresh interest, as if she had suddenly been presented to him in a new light, and asked, "Has she, then, a history?"

"You are a cool hand," thought Miss Douglas. But before she had time to prosecute her purpose of putting sly questions about the Count's acquaintance with Mr Rorke, her arm was touched by her brother Bob, the City man.

Bob had entered quietly, and after listening for a little with a deferential smile to the astronomer, had made his way towards the individual whom he judged, from his sister's previous description, to be Count Ramassy. Bob was a thick-set, large-headed, and well-featured young man, clad in well-cut clothes, but too sensible to subdue the natural energy of his manner to the regulation languor of the masquerader.

"Your name was mentioned to me yesterday in the City," he said, when introduced to the Count. "In connection with a Quicksilver Company in Bosnia," he added, in answer to the Count's look of polite inquiry. "Mr Rorke's concession—a good thing, I believe!"

Miss Quickset was conversing gaily with Mrs Rorke, and the astronomer's voice sounded clear and distinct in exposition to his fair auditor, but Mrs Rorke caught the mention of her husband's name and turned pale. Quickset attributed the change in her expression to his vivid picture of a cosmic catastrophe, and hastened to assure her that there was no chance of it in our time—it might happen in millions of years.

The Count paused for a moment as if searching his memory before answering Bob's question. Then his face lighted up, and he said, "Ah, yes; I believe it is a good thing. Mr Rorke called upon me about it before I left Vienna. I know the country well. The quicksilver-mines are near Foinica, and have not been worked for years. There is an immense amount of undeveloped mineral wealth in that region. I travelled there immediately after the Austrian occupation. If you will come to me any time you like to fix, I will tell you all I know about it. What a country that is for mountainous scenery,

Miss Douglas! You would revel in it. Chasms and gorges, with patches of the loveliest verdure—stupendous piles of rocks like Egyptian masonry, limestone peaks like pyramids; I have never seen such grandeur anywhere.”

“And the quicksilver can be got at?” queried the prosaic Bob.

“Certainly—in abundance. The only difficulty is with the roads; and the Government would assist in that, as they are anxious to get the interior opened up to the Adriatic coast. By the way, is not Mr Quickset’s son an engineer?”

Quickset had risen to go. “We shall see you to-night then,” he said, as the Count crossed to him. “I must look in at the Pantheon before going home. Come, Grace, and I will put you in a cab.”

“I am going to the Pantheon too,” said the Count.

It was finally arranged that Quickset and the Count should dine together at the Pantheon, and that Miss Quickset should stay a little longer with her friends.

On the way to the Pantheon the Count made dexterous use of his knowledge that young Quickset was an engineer. Incidentally he led the father to talk of him, and mentioned that a mining company in which he had been asked to interest himself was in want of a clever and capable man to survey the country and report. If the appointment was good enough for Mr Robert Quickset, the Count was certain that the projectors of the company would be only too glad to get him. Quickset promised to lay the matter before his son. “He is young,” the Count concluded, passing lightly from the subject, “and it might interest him to see the country. Perhaps it might not be too much to hope that you would accompany him as far

as my place on the Lake of Como.” Quickset, who was a much more guileless and impulsive man than he himself suspected, felt his heart warming towards this accomplished and obliging friend. It was one of the adventurer’s principles that he need not care how lavish he was in his promises, as it must always be possible to get out of them somehow with a little ingenuity. He could easily, when the time came, contrive some means of postponing Quickset’s visit to his palace on the Lake of Como.

He trusted to Chance and his own ingenuity, and so far neither had betrayed his trust. Chance was backing him up with all its might, perhaps as a reward for his unreserved confidence in its favour. When Chance suggested to him his little deceit about the calculated orbit of the comet, it saw much farther ahead than he did, had plans for him far beyond anything that he had conceived, and proposed to conduct its favourite to a pinnacle of success very much higher than he yet dreamed of.

The acute Miss Douglas suspected him; but, as often happens with very clever people, she was on a wrong scent. She had her own theory to account for Mrs Rorke’s embarrassment in the presence of the Count. That they had met before, and that there was something between them, she felt quite certain, and so far she was right. Her theory of the relationship between them was not the right theory; but she saw much to make her firmly convinced that it was. The more she watched them, the more certain she became. There are none so blind as those who are not looking the right way. Chance and the Count were much more than a match for Miss Douglas and lynx-eyed Suspicion.

THE NEGROES OF THE CONGO.

THE observations which I here propose to make have been the results of two years spent with the Congo International Expedition on a special service which has extended over an intercourse with—(1) the tribes on the Congo banks from its mouth up to internal Central Africa; (2) the natives of the western oil-rivers under British protection; and (3) the natives of the British possessions on the western coast. Experience of all these sorts and conditions of natives has naturally presented me with many a curious and interesting contrast. It has shown me actual examples of how great a modification civilised habits and civilised rule can effect upon a people by no means contemptible in what, for want of a better word, I will call the savage state: examples which, from personal observation of all the intermediate links in the chain of circumstances stretching from a savage to a civilised condition, have saved me from setting myself the unsatisfactory task of propounding theories.

The uncivilised negro of Central Africa is not (to use the language of Exeter Hall) a poor and ignorant savage. Judged from a mental standpoint he is neither poor nor ignorant. He has no poverty of ideas, and his reasoning powers are of a high order. He is deeply superstitious, has the organ of veneration well developed, and shows such great respect for tradition that to call it conservatism hardly expresses its comprehensiveness—for even might bows down before it. Incapacity and ignorance are, I opine, attributes relative to the moral and material surroundings of

the man and the stage of advancement to which his tribe has attained. This granted, it is libellous, therefore, to call men ignorant who, like the negroes of Central Africa, show such astonishing capacity, not only in the shrewd way in which they manage their petty affairs of state, but also in putting to its best use all that nature has provided them with—and that with a keen eye to climatic changes and climatic peculiarities.

The uncivilised negro regards the white man, not in the light of one with whom he is to put himself in competition, but as a being of altogether different calibre, almost of a different humanity, from himself. He believes that the whites possess powers almost unlimited, and it is always a matter of wonder to him that they allow themselves to be conquered by death. In one instance, where a tribe was strong in its belief that white men came from the water, and one of our party was unfortunately drowned, the chief of the tribe would often ask when he would return. It was useless to urge that he was dead, for the old chief would always give this pathetic answer: "No; he was tired of the black man, and he went to his home in the water to rest. He will soon return."

The uncivilised negro thinks white men aliens, and treats them as such. They are men quite outside him, and incapable of sympathising with his feelings. More especially is this seen with regard to his superstitious customs and his fetish-worship, which he deems white men incapable of understanding or expressing an opinion upon. An attempt at the latter

was once met with a disdainful request not to talk foolishly.

I propose to give one or two anecdotes of the most interesting occasions when the negro first came in contact with white men. During one of the first visits of a party belonging to the expedition to a certain tribe, the curious natives gathered open-mouthed round the white men, and discussed their appearance freely. The decision they arrived at as to where these strange creatures came from was this: That all white men come from the water, as witness their boots, which hide feet unlike black men's feet, but like fishes' fins. The big canoes (*i.e.*, steam-launches) they travel in were propelled, they said, through the water by white slaves who push them from behind; while the one white man who stood up in front of the big fire was cooking "chop" (*i.e.*, food) for the party.

The negro, again, is delighted if he can turn the tables on you and put you at a disadvantage. Once when a young Belgian officer died, and it was found practicable to procure the services of a priest from a neighbouring Roman Catholic mission to bury him, the funeral was accordingly conducted, as far as possible, with all the ornate and miscellaneous rites of that Church. After the ceremony, one old man who had been a spectator, remarked, "White man laughs at black man's fetish; what be this?"

Again. I was once present when a friend asked a chief if the latter knew his name. Being answered in the negative, he replied, "What! not know my name when I have been here two years!" "Do you know my name?" retorted the chief. "No," said my friend. "I have been here more than two years," quietly added the chief.

The personal character of the enlightened native or ridiculous savage—for he is both, according to the point of view from which you consider him—presents a curious mixture of the spoiled child and man of keen shrewdness. Easily angered, he is as easily pleased again by the presentation of a piece of gaudy cloth, an empty bottle, or some such trifle which he has never seen before. You play upon his feelings as you would on those of a spoiled child whom you wished to humour.

On the other hand, he is imbued from his earliest years with the importance of getting the better of his fellows; and so admirably does he disguise his feelings, that a stranger at a "palaver" might easily be misled by his air of excessive simplicity. He does not appear to be particularly vain of his personal appearance. Though great attention is paid to the dressing of the hair and the painting of the face, I do not find one instance where this appears to be inspired by simple vanity; it seems rather to be an observance of custom, of which he is very tenacious. But he is extremely avaricious, and his ambition is to possess much wealth. Towards this end he will sacrifice everything, except his fetishes and those brass ornaments which betoken his rank, for both are held sacred. He is also extremely suspicious—his capacity for suspicion being far greater than his power of faith. Once succeed in getting him to trust you, and he will trust up to a certain point, but never trust you blindly. In other respects consider him, as I have said, as a spoiled child who has a strange mental mixture of simplicity and shrewdness, and you will have a fair general estimate of the character of the uncivilised negro.

His superstitious observances include the loading himself with charms, as fetish protections against all kinds of ills. There are even special charms for special parts of the body, which must be placed only on that part to which they belong in order to be efficacious. In big "palavers" between chief and chief, each one is minutely searched by men of the opposite party, in order to ascertain if a fetish which would annul the whole proceeding is concealed about the person of either. Should such a manoeuvre succeed, it would be looked upon as only an admirable piece of shrewdness. He worships, too, or venerates with reverence, the spirits of his ancestors; some natural object—a tree, for instance—being selected as their abiding place, which promptly transforms it into a fetish-tree, damage to which is punishable by death. An extensive system of phallic-worship prevails amongst the people, the *motif* of which I have found it impossible to ascertain as yet, so averse are they to satisfying the curiosity of strangers—except that it appears to be dictated more by a feeling of awe than by any delight in indecency. Their various languages are rich and worthy of study, as he who knows anything of Bantu grammar will acknowledge. That of the Congo is musical and flowing; that of the Batéké is terse and brief.

In common with many other negro tribes of Western Africa, there is a curiously constituted society existing amongst them called the "Nkimba." This appears to be a system of training the young under what may be called priestly supervision, in accordance with the fetishistic ideas of the people, entailing a rigorous observance of certain forms and cere-

monies in dress and behaviour; and it possesses a distinct language understood only by the initiated, on whom are conferred many arbitrary powers. Very little is known of this institution, and there is material for much fruitful research in the customs of this and kindred societies, such as the Egbo of Old Calabar, and the societies of the Gaboon and Cameroon regions. It may be interesting, however, to insert here, in his own words, some information gathered by Mr Harvey of the Congo Livingstone Mission, during a long residence amongst the Nkimbas, which he courteously supplied me during my stay there:—

"The Nkimba is a secret society of—there is every reason to believe—ancient origin. Its object, to judge by its working, is to wield a despotic sway over the minds of both the enlightened and unenlightened, but especially over the latter. The Nkimba seems to claim power over all evil spirits, and especially over the 'Ndoki,' or arch evil one, whom they profess to catch and thrash unmercifully. Their (*i.e.*, the initiated) influence over the minds of the people is upheld by their knowledge of a distinct language called Nkimba, which they invariably employ when speaking to each other before a 'Mungwala,' or uninitiated one; and also by wearing a hideous grass dress which completely conceals their head and body, only a portion of their legs being visible below the dress. These exposed parts are made ghastly white by being daubed with whitewash.

"All the young male members of a community are eligible for initiation, the ceremony taking place at a certain fixed period. At the initiation ceremony the candidate has some kind of liquor handed him to drink, after which he dances round with such vehemence that eventually he falls down insensible. He is then declared to be dead, and any sceptical persons among the audience are invited to test the fact by a close inspection. However, it is usually taken for

granted—a sceptical frame of mind involving much danger to the individual indulging in it. The insensible man is taken away by the 'Zinkimba' performing the ceremony, and, after an interval, is brought back to the place of initiation alive, but an entirely different individual. He pretends not to know any one, not even his own relatives, but inquires their names, and the name of the town, its king, &c. He now receives a new name, which is added, or rather prefixed, to one of his former names. Ever afterwards this Nkimba name must never be omitted unless a direct insult is intended.

"After the initiation ceremony the candidate is secluded from both Mungwala (uninitiated) and those who have been formerly initiated; and during the next six months he never washes himself, but merely daubs his body with whitewash.

"The Zinkimba, owing to their ministry in the sphere of spiritualities, claim especial privileges in relation to carnal things, which claim is usually admitted by the poor frightened and bullied Mungwala. The order is evidently upon something like the Freemason principle, for a Mungwala who enters their enclosure pretending to be a Nkimba is readily detected by his inability to go through the various ceremonies. At the end of the term of training, all go to some secret watering-place to wash, and then are free. It seems to be quite distinct from fetishism."

Domestic slavery of course exists in all communities. The chiefs spend all their wealth in the purchase of slaves, despatching periodically parties up the river to buy young boys and girls, presumably from the marts which supply the eastern coast. In most villages the slaves are allowed to marry, and even to have a voice in the palavers on the political affairs of the tribe. The system of government is half patriarchal, half republican. The slaves are in all ways subject to their respective chiefs, who in turn owe allegiance

to the king. A good instance of the conservative tendencies of the natives is here shown, the king being in many cases a man much poorer and far less powerful than his tributary chiefs; but this in no way affects the loyalty of these chiefs, as far as outward respect and the payment of tribute are concerned. An example of one of these kings is the well-known Makoko, from whom M. de Brazza derived his claims to the Congo, which the powerful though tributary chiefs as well as the International Association disputed. The slaves work and fish for their owners, who in the latter case take a certain royalty on the results of their labour. In times of war they rally round their chiefs. In some tribes, however, the system of domestic slavery has a more vicious tendency. The chiefs retain all the young girls for their private harem, and the young and able-bodied men are not allowed to marry. These chiefs being principally elderly men, population in consequence deteriorates, and an incredible amount of secret licentiousness runs rampant amongst the youth of both sexes.

The most heinous crime appears to be theft, whether it consists in stealing a black man's goods or in having intercourse with his female slaves. Thefts from whites are legitimate—the white man being an alien—and are not punishable unless the white man himself insists on or inflicts punishment. The mode of punishment for theft was in one case as follows: The thief being taken in the act of stealing a piece of cassava-root from the public market, was tied securely to a long pole with his hands behind him; the pole was then planted in the ground like a flagstaff, and the unfortunate victim was left there to the

mercies of the vultures, to die in slow torture.

Witchcraft, apart from its religious significance, frequently is made the excuse for a cunning exercise of statecraft. It then becomes a powerful weapon in the hands of a jealous and suspicious chief, and when thus used, is an effective curb on any presumptuous young man who seems to his chief to be becoming too rich or too influential, to the detriment of his (the chief's) power. On the death of any one of the tribe being attributed to witchcraft, the "medicine-man" is sent for to discover the bewitcher. The culprit having been fixed upon, whether in compliance with a hint from the chief or otherwise, he is made to drink an infusion of the bark of the *nsassa* wood—a red-coloured bark which is pounded and boiled in water. In some cases in which the patient vomits this decoction, he is set free and regarded as innocent. This rarely occurs—or rather is allowed to occur; and the poison having done its work, frequently with the help of a knife, the body of the victim is disembowelled and the seat of the witchery removed.

Should, however, any influential member of the tribe fall sick, and his sickness be attributed to the action of malignant spirits, the medicine-women are called in to exorcise them, which is accomplished by means of an elaborate ceremony. With their bodies daubed with paint, they march round a large fire to the accompaniment of a weird incantation, plucking the feathers from a fowl and throwing them into the fire. This leads up to a Bacchanalian festival. These modern Mænads, playing stringed instruments and dancing wildly to equally wild songs, twirl madly round and round, twisting their bodies into

all kinds of contorted positions, and completing the ceremony by falling into violent fits of hysteresis induced by the abnormal excitement.

Another of their most notable ceremonies is entering into the bond of blood-brotherhood. This is made between chiefs who have hitherto been at enmity, for state purposes and for mutual security, and is held inviolable. The ceremony varies in different districts. In one case the contracting parties literally drink each other's blood, sucking it from an incision in the arm; in another, they smear each other's bodies with blood. But the ceremony most common is performed as follows: The arm of each person is cut with a sacred knife, and each taking a slice of banana, rubs it in the blood of his future brother, and eats the palatable *morceau*. A goat is then killed, and each takes a piece of its liver, dips it in salt, and presents it to the other. A set form of service is intoned by one member of the tribe intimating that the breaking of this tie of brotherhood will be avenged by instant death, and declaring that all old feuds hitherto existing between the contracting parties are now flung into the river to be carried away by the current. Though repulsive, this ceremony is impressive.

The dead are buried in a sitting position, with all their worldly goods around them. If a chief dies, his wives are sometimes sacrificed, and the entrails eaten in those districts where cannibalism prevails. The exterior of the grave is adorned with fetishes, empty bottles, and many household utensils intended for the use of the deceased during his passage to another condition.

The native women are the beasts of burden and the general labourers

of their lords and masters. They work in the fields, carry supplies to the markets, and superintend the sale of them. They represent so much money-value to their owners. The possession of many wives gives rank, and a woman is considered a courteous and valuable present. As a rule, from the nature of their life, the women are a stunted, ill-formed race: indeed in the majority of instances the children alone possess any pleasing features or habits. The perishable beauty of child-life is exhibited even here; and it is in Africa where one can freely realise that no surroundings, however repulsive, can altogether banish the freshness of childhood.

There is one strange exception to this almost universal treatment of women, which deserves a longer study than I was able to give to it. A tribe called the Wabouma, living to the south of the Congo in Central Africa, I found ruled by queens and female chiefs. The pleasing features of the women here—their graceful and well-developed figures, lithe and lissom, and undeformed by laborious toil—were a pleasant contrast to their Congo sisters. Some of the husbands had a real or fancied henpecked appearance, which afforded amusement to our party.

Thus far I have described the native of the Congo region as I have found him, and it must be remembered that I allude to the native who is beyond the reach of white trading influence. Those natives of the river who come within the range of the influence of the white traders on the coast, are mainly an inferior race, very much under the influence of a liquor supplied by these traders which is called *gin*, but bears little resemblance to the spirit known

by that name in Europe. And before passing to the next branch of my subject, I will add a few remarks on the way the International Association has exercised its rights as sovereign in this territory, with the reason mainly that they will be useful as a means of contrast when I describe the native of our English settlements on the western coast.

The native chief preserves his complete independence, and is unhampered in the control of his subjects, except in matters of sacrificing life for the gratification of superstitious instincts. Where practicable, the influence of the International Association has been used to forbid human sacrifices; to settle old-standing feuds between tribe and tribe, and thus open free communication on all roads, enabling trading-parties to cross the boundary of their tribal districts with security, which in turn leads to the establishment of common markets; to consolidate these friendly relations, and to establish these advantages on a permanent basis; to settle native palavers in accordance with native custom as far as it is consistent with perfect justice, and thus to win the confidence of the chiefs,—a policy, be it noted, far different from that of the French, who crush the natives, and of the Portuguese, who bully them (where they can), and far different also from the English policy of pampering them: with the result that one can travel a distance of 2000 miles under the Association flag without fear of molestation, through districts inhabited by tribes of natives whose power is by no means to be despised. Reference might be made in contrast to the powerful Ashanti tribe, that keeps our Gold Coast colony in constant fear of attack; and also to the numerous feuds between the internal tribes of the

Lagos district, which have prevented, and seemingly—for all that the Government will do to check them—will prevent, the commercial development of what might be a rich possession. Whatever be the future of the International Association (now forming the administration of the Congo Independent State),—whether it eventually succumb to the mighty cupidity of Europe, or, what is more likely, fall to pieces from internal maladministration,—it will have merited commendation on this point—not to mention the great sacrifice of life, and the expenditure of vast sums of money without hope of return, in a purely philanthropic enterprise—that its policy has not been to acquire territory for the mere love of obtaining it, but to acquire it so as to prepare the way for the perfect development of the resources of the country, and to allow the prosecution of commercial efforts to be commenced unhampered by political complications.

From this sketch of the Congo native beyond the reach of white influence, I now pass to the natives of the oil-rivers, who have for a long time been in intercourse with white traders and missionaries. In some cases this intercourse has lasted over a century; but it is, however, sufficient for my purpose to group all together, and thus be enabled to generalise results with accuracy—for in no one instance does this intercourse date later than the childhood of the present ruling chiefs.

The district known as the oil-rivers (*i.e.*, rivers where palm-oil is the chief article of produce) is comprised in that part of the West African coast which lies between the Benin and Old Calabar rivers, and therefore includes the large delta of the Niger—many of these

so-called rivers being without doubt mouths of the Niger. In most of the numerous water-ways in this region, trade between white merchants and the native chiefs is carried on, the principal depots being Benin, Brass, Opobo, New Calabar, Bonny, Akassa, and Old Calabar. The chief articles used in barter for the produce of the country are Manchester cotton goods, silk, salt, brass rods, spirits, &c. For the most part, the chiefs of the tribes adjacent to these places act as the middle-men to the tribes of the interior, and as such, are fully aware of the advantages of their position, and have hitherto successfully opposed any attempt to deprive them of or lessen these advantages. Though these rivers are under British protection, no attempt is made to interfere with the freedom of the native, except in questions affecting white men, and then it is found a very difficult matter to persuade or control him. Each chief governs his own district after his native fashion, without dictation, and consequently his independence of character is preserved. In some cases—Old Calabar, for instance—white men have even been allowed to become members of his fraternity, and thus to assume the influence that belongs to a free-born native of the country. This concession to native prejudice the merchant has found very useful to him in the collection of his debts, and is a means of protection to himself.

The long intercourse with white men that the native of these parts has enjoyed—though it has not perceptibly changed his mental or moral condition—has produced a most material change in his bodily habits. Much has he learnt of their manners; many things have been brought to his knowledge of which he was formerly ignorant;

and the opportunities of noticing how white men live, have given him the means of exercising his innate imitateness. Particularly is this shown in his houses, furniture, and domestic habits. Instead of the mud or grass hut which was sufficient for his ancestors, he has built himself large, clean, and airy houses, with doors and windows, and furnished with tables, chairs, and beds; and in many cases he has bought houses in Europe prepared after the European fashion. The chief men, whose houses these are (the lower classes still live in their old-fashioned squalor), take their bath every morning, and eat their food with knife, fork, and spoon. I have spent a far more uncomfortable night in an English roadside inn than in one of these cool and clean houses, which, amongst their many familiar objects, have an interesting strangeness about them. These chiefs are mostly descendants of the old native slave-dealers, and are consequently possessed of immense wealth. Their intimacy with white men commences with their childhood; for they are mainly brought up as boys on the trading-hulks and in the merchants' houses. Their wealth and lavish expenditure are astonishing. To buy goods from the traders to the amount of several thousands of pounds at one time, has been by no means a rare transaction in Old Calabar.

As, therefore, they retain their native independence, they retain also their innate simplicity and courtesy. The tenacity with which they cling to the creed of their fathers is illustrated by their adherence, in spite of missionary influence, to their old fetishistic form of religion, the *djudju* superstition. That which is *nkissi* or fetish on the Congo is *djudju* in the

oil-rivers, with the difference that there is often associated with the *djudju* a rude form of private worship, and worship, as a ceremony, is non-existent among the Congo tribes. The boy leaves the trading-house, where he has grown familiar with the ways of the whites, to return to his native customs—modified though they be—and his native faith. The old and savage method of taking vengeance in war-time remains, with their religion, unchanged. They bury their dead in their houses, and carry both the corpses and the domestic *djudju* (fashioned after the likeness of a rude altar-piece) away with them in their migrations. They are also — thanks to the traders — well armed. In addition to rifles of the latest pattern, each chief possesses one or two good Armstrong or Gatling guns, which he fits into his war-canoes. These guns are by no means unfamiliar to them, as in many places several specimens of the old-fashioned iron cannon are found—relics, probably, of the days of the slave-trade. The chiefs show an easy, generous hospitality, entertaining a white visitor as profusely as possible without signs of nervousness or hesitation, and with a graceful native courtesy quite their own. They will toast you in glasses of brandy or gin with all good-fellowship, in the enthusiastic fashion they have learnt from the white men, whose hospitality to passing strangers in these regions is notorious.

All these changes, however, have produced no corresponding change in his moral condition. Where missionaries have long been at work, a parade of being converted to Christianity is kept up; but it is mainly superficial, and in all parts superstitious customs are adhered to, though the more barbarous rites are performed more in

secret than formerly. The attitude of the natives towards the white man is that towards one who ministers to their wants, and who gives them as much as they can give him in return; but they have no particular fear of him, and do not think him different from themselves, except that undefined feeling of racial difference that must always exist. Thus they treat him less as an alien than as an equal, quietly ignoring any attempt on his part to interfere with their private affairs,—which latter feeling has been fostered by their protectors, for in extreme cases where British consular aid has been invoked, when they are in their most obstreperous moods, it has scarcely resulted in more than a threat of punishment; and a threat that will never be carried into execution is a matter the native cares least about. They see the advantages that accrue to both sides from trade; and helped by the competition amongst the whites, they have a sufficiently sharp idea of business tactics to be keenly alive to their own interests, so as to make the white trader cultivate them and humour their whims. Having a greater knowledge of the white man's habits, imitating him in many material ways, and losing any little awe he may once have had for him, he differs very little *morally* from his Congo brother. Domestic slavery subsists in all these communities, the slaves of each chief acting as his servants in promoting his business.

The status of the women of these tribes is not raised, neither does it appear that the rigour of their condition is softened from contact with the white man and the gradual assimilation of his manners. The women remain as of old,—the common toilers, the “hewers of wood and the drawers

of water,” and the means of increasing the tribe. Missionary influence appears to be confined to the bringing up of rescued female slaves.

Passing now to the next upward stage, I come to the negro of the English settlements in West Africa—viz., Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Lagos—who has received the full benefit of advanced civilisation in government, education, and freedom of the subject, in consequence of which he presents a marked contrast to the tribes I have already sketched. In the condition which I have described—that is, in the savage state and in that in which he has had a long and extended intercourse with white men—the negro retained his native independence of character, his native religion, his native cast of thought, and his native vices, modified only in a slight degree by extraneous influences. In the civilised negro of the English settlements, one sees, on the contrary, a man who has merged his independence of character into a passion for slavish imitation—who has changed his religion, and in reducing it to the level of his own intelligence, has deprived it of all beauty, and who has retained only his native vices in their pristine simplicity. He revels in his freedom, until it seems sometimes to have intoxicated him. On the Congo we find white men treated as aliens with the flavour of demigods; in the oil-rivers they are the black man's neighbours, whom it is desirable to cultivate and encourage, because they are necessary to his comfort; but in the English settlements, being men and brothers, they are first to be imitated and sucked dry of every material advantage, and then in an insignificant way to be despised.

The common type of the young

educated negro in the English colonies is as follows: He is generally a clerk, a skilled artisan of the carpenter and blacksmith stamp, or a miscellaneous trader. Should he at any time have come within reach of the law, each term of imprisonment that he has received is considered by his fellows an additional tribute to his shrewdness and capacity. Education has sharpened and refined the latent cunning in his nature, so as to show him the full advantage of hypocrisy; and he is consequently an adept at deceit, and a most successful thief. In his epistolary efforts, he indulges with appalling profuseness in sesquipedalian words, utterly regardless of sense. He is disgustingly ostentatious in his observances of his new religion. The names of the most sacred characters of the Scriptures are always irreverently conspicuous in his appeals to sympathy, and ever upon his hypocritical lips. It would be impossible to give instances without offending good taste. The exceptions to this type are so few and striking as to be sufficient to conclusively formulate a rule.

He enjoys the blessings of our legal system, which he cannot understand, but to turn aside which he is not slow to see the advantages of quibbling. He can also feel generally certain that in a dispute with a white man the balance will incline to his side—the behaviour of some of the legal luminaries of these colonies in cases which have come under my own observation, frequently showing an unhealthy desire to strain a point in his favour, with an eye, I presume, to popularity. But more especially is this evil apparent in jury cases where the majority of the jurymen are black men and the plaintiff is a white man. He has a passion for litigation—in

which he indulges without stint—and a very indifferent idea of the nature and sacredness of an oath. It is not difficult for a criminal to find any number of witnesses who will be prepared to swear to anything and everything in his favour.

This representative of the civilised African negro shows by no means an angelic or enlightened demeanour towards his less educated brothers. I once had in my service an educated negro from Lagos of the stamp I have described above, and also a sergeant-major, a man of the Hausa tribe, who was endowed with all the best qualities of that race, bravery and faithfulness amongst them. This last, the first-named informed me, was a "nigger," whereas he himself was a "coloured gentleman." This fairly represents the general attitude of the educated classes towards those on a lower level; that is, a supposed intellectual superiority, the coloured gentleman side by side with the nigger, or the men who speak English correctly and those who speak nigger-English—as one of the latter class would say, the men who "savy book good," and the men who "no savy book plenty." It was not long since that white men incurred heavy penalties in Sierra Leone for using the term "nigger" towards blacks, the law treating it as a term of opprobrium. The civilised negro is as ignorant as his Congo brother of such a quality as gratitude; and I do not know a human being more irritating or more personally disagreeable than the representative of Young Africa in these English settlements.

Amongst the fair sex there is the same love of drawing distinctions. The educated lady, with her knowledge of the three R's, dons a dress of European pattern, and thereupon becomes what is

called a "frock-lady"; while her poorer sister, who adheres to the simple old-fashioned style of costume, is dubbed a "cloth-woman": all of which marks an interesting phase in the progress of civilisation, and offers opportunities for pregnant moralising. Whether the status of the women of these colonies is elevated by their being free, beyond the mere material improvement that that freedom brings, it is difficult to determine. In many cases where the man is educated, and, what is more important, is well dressed in European costume, the wife speaks only her own language, wears her native dress, and is occupied with household drudgery. In other cases the wives have been educated in mission schools, and are on a level with their husbands — dress, as usual, marking the distinction; for where the former would merely fold a piece of coloured cloth round her waist, the latter would have a single robe fashioned into a garment that is a compromise between the loose cloth and the European pattern of dress. Beyond this, and except only in isolated instances, occurring principally in Lagos and Sierra Leone, where the daughters and wives of the better class of natives have been educated in Europe, the moral tone of the female population shows decidedly no perceptible improvement, and is without doubt worse than in the old condition from which they have been emancipated, where freedom of action was checked under the stern rule of domestic slavery.

I have written here of the natives of the towns, such as Sierra Leone, Cape Coast Castle, Accra, and Lagos. The country people remain for the most part unchanged in their habits and customs, and it is not uncommon for human sacrifices to be performed in secret

amongst them. Considering the tone and capacity of the native mind, it is a fair question to ask why civilisation should appeal only to the negro's lower nature, intensifying it at the expense of the few higher feelings he possesses in the blissful ignorance of his savage state. History, I presume, does not record what was the condition of the naked woad-stained Briton in his first stage of civilisation.

There is apparent, too, in the budding sprig of civilisation that I have been describing, a trace of incipient patriotism, especially among the younger generation. Oblivious of the freedom that has been given to them, and of the education that they have been enabled to receive under the English rule, it is their fancy that the government is one of an oppressor; that having received all these benefits, it is now unbecoming to be governed by white men. Consequently their attitude towards them is as contemptuous and antagonistic as their attitude towards their less educated fellow-countrymen; but it is a childish contempt, and antagonism provocative of laughter rather than the laudable antagonism of an aspiring race. And this latter remark applies very well to the civilised negro under every phase. There is an absence of any real manliness about him in his advancement — an utter want of stability in his moral character. Intercourse with him induces feelings of contempt or pity rather than admiration or respect.

So far I have sketched the West African negro as I have met him, without intending to point a moral or form a criticism. It must be remembered, however, that I have written of the negro proper with only a passing reference to the mongrel Mohammedan tribes of the Senegal and Upper Niger.

LORD LYTTON'S 'GLENAVERIL.'

SPONTANEOUSNESS, an inspiration that is genuine, luxuriance of fancy and of diction, elevation of sentiment, wide reach of thought, a humour quick, playful, often charming and never harsh — these are qualities for which we cannot be too grateful in poetry. Lord Lytton's new poem has them, and has, besides, the not-to-be-despised advantage of containing an ingeniously woven story, fresh situations, and interesting characters. Those who vex their souls with dogmatic theories about High Art, and who cannot take a poem on its own merits without reference to conventional standards, may experience some perplexity about 'Glenaveril.' It cannot be put into any ordinary category. No familiar critical label can be affixed to it. Is it a poem at all? Can it properly be so designated? Is it not rather a novel or a romance in verse? Is it an imitation of 'Don Juan'? If so, must it not be pronounced a failure?

To these and all such inquiries, the judicious reader, who reads for enjoyment and not for disputation, will turn a deaf ear. He will dismiss from his mind all prejudice and preoccupation whatsoever, except that here is a man who has something to say, whose imagination is full of his subject, and who writes in verse because verse is the natural vehicle for his purpose. There is a spirit abroad in our critical generation, which, if allowed to work its will, would unduly restrict the employment of verse. We may call it, for want of a better name, the professional spirit,

or the spirit of specialism. Most of our students of poetry are specialists in metre, qualified to judge poetical form with the eager zest of professional connoisseurs, and not slow to exercise their qualification. If put upon its defence, this *quasi* professional spirit would doubtless find a great deal to say in its own justification. It might claim to be the champion of workmanship aiming at perfection against the lax and degrading practices of the amateur. Our age is intolerant of the amateur in all departments. To do anything with an approach to perfection, a man must give his whole powers to it, must choose his line, and consecrate his life to his line. We will not have the amateur in painting, or music, or acting, or any of the fine arts. He may give himself the airs of unstudied genius, and scoff at the pains of the laborious professional, and his narrow, artificial, mechanical methods. But the mastery of any art cannot be purchased except at the price of lifelong devotion. The amateur always betrays himself. This spirit of protest against amateurism is probably stronger in our generation than it has ever been before.

Now, in so far as it supports the endeavour after perfection, the professional spirit is a good spirit, and one not to be lightly discouraged. But it may easily become too self-conscious, too aggressive, too tyrannical, especially in poetry. Amateurism, in the purely executive fine arts as much as in the industrial arts, we may freely give over

Glenaveril; or, The Metamorphoses. A Poem in Six Books. By the Earl of Lytton. Two vols. John Murray, London: 1885.

to be torn, and rent, and trampled upon. In any art where the thing done appeals directly to the senses, we are less easily satisfied with anything short of the highest attainable excellence of execution. But poetry is a complex art, which, it is needless to say, does not appeal to the senses alone, however essential may be harmonious and melodious numbers as an ingredient in the poet's effect. Craftsmanship, technical excellence of phrase and rhyme and rhythm, is not equally all-important with technical excellence in the arrangement of forms and colours. A poet may be but an amateur in these matters, and yet capable of yielding us higher pleasures, fuller enjoyment, than the most studied master of metrical craft. The matter may be rich enough to carry us triumphantly over such slight defects in his verse as we can hardly expect to be absent from the work of one who is not a professional metrician. The whole personality of the man counts directly in poetry as it does in no other art. A poet without metrical skill is not a poet; and yet a poet with inferior command over the resources of his art may affect us much more profoundly than another vastly his superior in the dexterous manipulation of rhythmical language.

This is a truism; and yet it needs to be repeated in a generation apt to regard all work from the point of view of the technical specialist—a generation to which Byron himself is but an amateur in verse. The splendid elaboration of such great artists in words as Lord Tennyson and Mr Swinburne has proved, and threatens to prove, as benumbing and disheartening to the poetic genius of their time as Pope's exquisite finish was to the eighteenth century. The tendency undoubtedly now is to judge an

aspirant to poetical honours almost exclusively by the quality of his verse. Wordsworth's conception of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," is as little in favour now as it was when it was first promulgated. This is none the less the case that our critics have not gone back in express theory from the ground occupied at the beginning of this century. They are still ready to protest against the narrow canons and the artificial poetic diction of our so-called classical school. Their conception of poetic art is much broader and sounder at least than that with which the eighteenth century was credited. But the spirit of current criticism has this in common with the critical spirit which upheld Pope for so long as the standard of excellence, that in judging of a new poem it thinks more of execution than of subject and substance. The form is the first consideration; above everything correctness of form is demanded. With this in theory nobody can quarrel; but the practice that goes along with the theory of rejecting as worthless whatever does not possess the virtue of perfect form—of looking at the form out of relation to the matter, and shutting the eyes to merits that a poet may gain at some sacrifice of form—is not so much commendable as mischievous.

Nobody would dream of upholding want of correctness as a merit. But such mastery of language as shall be adequate to the expression of poetic feeling in perfect verse, in rhythm that never halts or stumbles, and rhymes that always ring true, can be obtained on no terms short of entire surrender to the practice of the art. "The craft so hard to learn" can be learnt on no other conditions. Is, then, a man, with thoughts and

feelings to express that cannot fitly be expressed in prose, and who cannot consecrate his life to the craft of poetry, to abjure altogether the use of verse? Such an ordinance would greatly impoverish the reading world. And if it were to be applied to verse, justice would demand that it should be applied equally to prose, for perfect prose is hardly less difficult to write than perfect verse. Why, when a book appears in verse, should the form have such a disproportionate share of attention, and such an overwhelming voice in deciding the rank of the book? The thing said in verse is at least of equal importance with the manner of saying it. The manner, doubtless, is of prime importance in a work that is intended to be monumental and imperishable, because it is the manner that gives distinction to the thought. But why should the use of verse be restricted to works "built for eternity"? Why should everything that appears in verse be criticised as if it were so intended?

The use to which Lord Lytton puts verse in 'Glenaveril' seems to us perfectly legitimate, as it is undeniably delightful in its results. He has adopted a system of verse in which, with his amazing natural copiousness and facility, he can move almost as rapidly as in prose. The verse is not felt as an encumbrance on freedom of movement in the lighter levels of the poem; its lively chimes are an

exhilarating accompaniment as we race rapidly along; while in the pauses of the action, when the poet stops to meditate and comment on the fragment of life which his imagination has created, the verse lends itself easily and naturally to the burden of a deeper and fuller music. The purist would call his metre licentious; it is certainly not correct. The rhymes are sometimes bad, and they fall upon particles and insignificant words, and come in abruptly in the middle of clauses, in a way that would have made Dr Guest stare and gasp, and might make him even now turn in his grave. Irregular to the last degree is Lord Lytton's metre—much more licentious even than Byron's *ottava rima* throughout the greater portion of the poem. We may describe the movement often as "choppy." Many of the stanzas might be written out as prose without so much as a change in the order of the words. But when the events to be narrated rise above the commonplace, and the sentiment of the story becomes more intense, the metre accommodates itself to the change of feeling, and puts on a graver and more steady demeanour. The most severe of metrical purists can have little fault to find with the following exquisitely tender and musical bird's song, which, in the freshness of its music and its sentiment, recalls the work of our "morning-star of song":—

"Come hither, hither! come from Heaven, O Love!

Behold this maiden, young, and pure, and fair,
Whose tender sighs have had the power to move

A little bird that owes to thy sweet care
His tiny nest in yonder myrtle grove,

Which holds a bliss so great,—could song declare
The greatness of the bliss in that small nest,
The song he sings would burst his happy breast!

O Love, thou lord of all delights! so kind
To every little bird whose friend thou art,

Where can thy consecrating presence find
 A sweeter home than in this maiden's heart?
 The honeysuckle in the soft south wind
 My song hath rocked; my wing hath brushed
 The pale rose-blossoms of the eglantine,
 And searched the scented darkness of the pine.
 The solemn oak my sheltered sleep hath housed,
 The myrtle spray beneath my steps hath danced,
 In many a frolic bower have I caroused,
 Thro' many a glade of sunlit leafage glanced;
 The silver Aprils my spring pipe hath roused,
 The golden Junes my summer notes entranced,—
 But nowhere found I home more worthy thee,
 Than doth this child's pure spirit seem to me.

O hither, hither, Love, and here abide!
 And I to thee shall all my debt have paid
 For that sweet home thou didst for me provide,
 Where dwells my mate within the myrtle shade.
 O hither, hither, come from Heaven and glide
 Into the glowing heart which Heaven hath made
 Thine earthly temple, god of birds and flowers,
 And be this maiden thine, as thou art ours!

O Love, what flower than this young life is fairer?
 What bird than this young spirit hath to woo thee
 A purer note? O Love, what bliss is rarer
 Than thine shall be when hers is owed unto thee?
 O hither, hither, come from Heaven, and hear her,
 Nor let her virgin sigh unanswered sue thee!
 But give to her, as thou to us hast given,
 The happiness of Heaven, of Heaven, of Heaven!"

There are many such melodious bursts in the course of the story, rising out of it as occasion prompts, spontaneous and unsolicited. To those who know Lord Lytton only as a politician and a diplomatist, the most remarkable thing about the poem will seem its youthful, unjaded, unworldly freshness of sentiment. Very rarely are politics suffered to intrude into this charming fairy-land of romance; here it is the fantastic poet that speaks, the accomplished scholar, the mystic whom science has confirmed in his doctrine of romantic affinities.

If any critic is still puzzled for

"Long ere the child hath left its mother's knee
 The web of the man's character is spun;
 Those future paths no living eye may see,
 Ere life's beginnings were by Fate begun;
 And all the living do, and all they be,
 Proceeds from what the dead have been, or done."

a descriptive title to 'Glenaveril,' we would humbly suggest this—"a scientific romance in verse." The leading incidents are as strange as any to be found in romance, and yet they are such that science must pronounce them to be within the bounds of earthly probability. "Haphazard, that eccentric humorist," the presiding divinity of Romance, is there; but his capricious freaks are counterworked, controlled, and in the end overborne by a steadier, stronger influence,—the Fate discovered, or at least formulated, by modern science, hereditary disposition.

The provinces of the two rival powers, Circumstance and Destiny, sometimes conflicting, sometimes harmoniously combining, have never been so distinctly conceived in romance before, nor their mutual relations worked out with such definiteness and fulness of imaginative embodiment. The scientific framework of the story is not obtruded; it is covered over with such luxuriance of detail, accumulated by the poet's opulent imagination, that its presence might possibly escape detection. But the

argument, the central idea, is scientific. The romance is eminently a romance of the time; it could not have been conceived in any other generation than our own.

A glance at the main outlines of the story will show this. Two families are introduced to us in the first canto—the noble English family of Glenaveril, and a humble German family of Lutheran pastors. There is a strange fatality in the Glenaveril line. Twelve barons in succession have perished by violent deaths.

“Many an old Glenaveril, sire and son,
Had fallen in savage clan or Border feud :
Others at Acre or at Ascalon
Had Painim swords with Christian blood embued :
Some in the Stuart's cause had gaily gone
To Hanoverian scaffolds : some at lewd
And brawling feasts when swords, in wine, were crossed,
Had perished for a wager or a toast.
One young Glenaveril, in Childe Harold's train,
Had been at Nauplia the first to fall :
One upon Waterloo's historic plain
Had found a soldier's death and burial :
One had in grim Mahratta war been slain :
One in a hurdle-race was killed : but all,
As if the victims of some weird command,
Had come to violent ends by sea or land.”

The thirteenth baron seems likely to break the fatal spell. His tastes are peaceful; he cannot bear field-sports; he never hunts or races except “through picture-galleries, and after rare editions of engravings.” But his fate overtakes him one day as he is living quietly with his wife in the Black Forest. He is riding out at a rapid and heedless pace, when his horse shies, and he is thrown over a precipice. The fatal taint of character, hereditary recklessness, had found its opportunity.

This calamity is made to create the situation out of which the story takes its rise. The dead body is carried to the house of the Lutheran pastor's widow, where Lady Glenaveril is lodged, and the shock brings on a premature confinement.

As chance will have it, the poor widow has just given birth to a posthumous child, without having made any preparation for its reception; and the lady, sympathising with her suffering sister's troubles, has called in the doctor and nurse engaged for herself. There is thus but one doctor and one nurse between them. To add to the confusion, the pastor's widow dies. The nurse, stupid and heartless, angry at having double duties to perform, omits to put any distinguishing mark on the two babies committed to her care; and when the doctor wishes to show hers to Lady Glenaveril, to divert her from her grief for her husband, he is obliged to take one of them at haphazard.

It thus becomes uncertain which

of the two is the real Lord Glenaveril,—uncertain, that is to say, to the reader—for of the personages in the story, only the nurse and the doctor are in the secret. There is nothing to determine it but the character, the hereditary disposition, shown in their future lives; and these lives the poet writes with an eye throughout to the problem. It was Lady Glenaveril's wish that her own son, Ivor, and the widow's son, Emmanuel, should be brought up as brethren to-

gether; but Emmanuel has a spinster aunt, Martha Müller, of the most sturdy independence of spirit, who will not hear of it on any terms. Two generations of Müllers had been lights of the Lutheran Church. Emmanuel's grandfather had been a redoubtable theologian, of profound and splendid erudition; Emmanuel's father had been a quiet pastor, universally beloved. Mistress Müller claims the boy for the same high vocation.

"The son must finish what the sire began.
And Providence hath in that boy of his
A miracle vouchsafed us. What a man
The child will be! Just look at him! He is
An infant Samson, born to lead the van
Of Israel to battle."

No persuasion can shake the aunt's resolution. By - and - by, when the boys have reached the age of thirteen, Lady Glenaveril dies, and Ivor is left to the care of an old German professor, Herr Edelrath, a friend of the family, whose immense learning, unworldly wisdom, and simplicity of heart are sketched with delightfully sympathetic humour. Herr Edelrath

is the good genius, the benevolent fairy of the romance, as well as the mouthpiece of the poet's philosophical reflections. He is foiled by the inflexible aunt in another attempt to divert Emmanuel from the vocation she had chosen for him. She would not have her nephew's independence compromised. "How many," cries the poet,—

"How many generous ideas ere now
Good Sense with its stout truncheon hath struck down!
It takes them for illusions, and we know
Good Sense spares no illusions but its own.
Sentiment aims too high, and Sense too low.

Edelrath possibly had judged aright,
But in his judgment he lacked faith. The scheme
Of Mistress Müller was erroneous quite;
But Error never doubts. All men who seem
Convinced, we should mistrust with all our might."

However, with patient tact he succeeds in bringing the two boys together, and they become bosom friends. And then, as the gentle

student watches the development of their characters, he is greatly disturbed and perplexed. "Here," he says,—

"Here, from a race of peaceful shepherds springs
A little warrior, born to rule and fight;
And there from a long line of warrior kings
Comes forth at last a peaceful shepherd wight,
Meek as a lamb."

. In the Professor's eyes it is a mystery, one of those rare exceptions to the fixed order of Nature. Emmanuel, the pastor's son, is frank, gallant, gay, and self-reliant. Ivor, the Earl's son, is dreamy, studious, tenderly affectionate, with a craving for love and sympathy. The stern old spinster, in spite of her jealous pride, is drawn mysteriously towards Ivor; her bosom yearns for him against her will. On the other hand, Edelrath is conscious of an unaccountable attraction in Emmanuel. Emmanuel, though he toils with energy at his theological studies, has no liking for them; he is more at home in scarlet coat and leather breeches; every gillie at Glenaveril Castle would go through fire and water for him. When he reads the motto on the gates of this

castle, a thrill goes through him, and he bitterly regrets his own want of ancestry. Ivor, on the contrary, has no taste for either the duties or the pleasures of a great landowner and nobleman. The pleasures of rank have no attraction for him; its duties are a burden and a bore. He tries public life, but his appearance in Parliament serves only to give Lord Lytton an opening for one of the few political episodes in the poem, a sketch of the leading figures in both Chambers—sketches which, not unnaturally in a romance of heredity, recall the manner of the first Lord Lytton in 'St Stephen's.' Lord Lytton, like Dr Johnson, "takes care that the Whig dogs have not the best of it." But as for Ivor—

"His German training spoilt his English life;
He could not catch the brisk enthusiasm
Of those about him. Paltry seemed the strife,
And mad the combatants. With no sweet spasm
Of emulous pride he to their fluttering life
And rattling drum responded. A drear chasm
Of hopes and loves and faiths unsatisfied
Him from the world he lived in did divide."

So far events seem to show that Haphazard has made a blunder in its choice of the infants. But the crowning test, the application of which constitutes the principal part of the romance, is yet to come. One day when the two young men were busy at Heidelberg, Emmanuel reading hard but against the grain for his final examination by the Faculty, Ivor planning a grand tour in which Emmanuel was to travel as Lord Glenaveril while he accompanied him as Lord Glenaveril's private secretary, a letter came containing a strange story and a strange offer. The letter was addressed to Emmanuel Müller, student; the writer was an American heiress, Cordelia, daughter of one Johann Stahl,

deceased; and the offer was nothing less singular than that of the heart, hand, and fortune of this heiress to Emmanuel, whom she had never seen, and who up to this moment was not aware of her existence. For the motives of this romantic proposal we must refer to the poem, a whole canto of which is occupied with this letter—one of the best cantos in the six books; enough to say that the proposal was made in pursuance of the wishes of Cordelia's dead father, who had loved Mary Haggerdorn, Emmanuel's reputed mother, in his youth, and wished that the happiness denied by perverse circumstances in one generation should be consummated in the next by the union of his

child and hers. Johann Stahl had intended to visit Europe himself, and make the young man's acquaintance, but he died before he could carry out his intention; and Cordelia, left to herself, hit upon the plan of writing frankly to the son of her father's lost love, trusting that he would not misunderstand her frankness.

Misunderstand her, however, Emmanuel did. He treated the letter with incredulous scorn as a silly hoax, a bait for his cupidity to bring him into ridicule, a cruel insult to his poverty. But the dreamy and imaginative Ivor, into whose hands the letter fell, gave it a very different reception. He was charmed with Cordelia's romantic generosity and ingenuous faith; his heart responded to the honest simplicity of her offer; he at once understood her, and fell passionately in love with her. He answered the letter with Emmanuel's permission in Emmanuel's name. In vain Edelrath discovered the love-blinded youth's deceit before the letter was despatched, lectured his ward on the cruelty and dishonesty of the vicarious reply, and burnt the letter as he supposed before Ivor's eyes. Misadventure in this instance fought on the side of Fate: the letter destroyed was a letter from Emmanuel to the Professor; Ivor's letter was accidentally posted and reached its destination.

All that came of this,—how Ivor and Emmanuel exchanged names and set out on their travels; how they met Cordelia in Switzerland, and how Cordelia and Ivor, the moment their eyes met, recognised one another by mysterious intuition; how Emmanuel, passing as Lord Glenaveril, met a violent death in Alpine climbing; how Ivor, passing as Emmanuel Müller, the Earl's private secretary, was nearly killed in a heroically gener-

ous effort to save his friend; how he lay insensible for weeks, nursed by Cordelia; how, when he recovered, he allowed the report of Lord Glenaveril's death to go uncontradicted, assumed the name of Emmanuel Müller, and passed with Cordelia into the Land of Promise,—all this we cannot attempt to tell in prose. We have given a bald sketch of the framework merely to show the originality of Lord Lytton's *motif*. Nothing but actual perusal of the poem can convey any idea of the semblance of reality which he has given to his fantastically romantic characters, of the warmth of sentiment with which he has invested their ideal lives, or the richness and variety of his commentary on the passing incidents of the story. The friendship between Ivor and Emmanuel, and the love between Ivor and Cordelia, is so romantic, so unworldly, so sentimental in the sense of rising above any sentiment openly acknowledged between ordinary pairs of friends or lovers in our workaday world, that one is not astonished to find the poet's picture of such feelings received with something of the mocking incredulity with which the hard practical Emmanuel received Cordelia's gushing letter. But those whose hearts are still young will not dislike the picture, painted as it is with the warmth of colour that comes from sincere sympathy with fresh youthful loves and friendships. The spirit of the poet's commentary on life is the spirit of a man of the world whom the world has not soured and contracted, whose sympathies have been quickened and expanded instead of being blunted and narrowed by wide experience of mankind, whom knowledge of men has made not scornful and incredulous of human nature, but

sharper to detect under all disguises of appearance native beauty and worth of character. From the first page to the last we find ourselves in frank communion with a genuinely humane spirit, observant, sympathetic, with a rich culture of heart as well as of mind. The poet who can create such living portraits as Professor Edelhuth, Herr Eckerman, and Johann Stahl, has something to say which the world is the better for hearing.

We have spoken of amateurs and professionals in the art of verse. Looking to the number of volumes of verse that Lord Lytton has published, it would be absurd to call him an amateur in any sense except this, that the elaboration of his verse has apparently not been with him an independent aim; that the form has been treated as of less importance than the matter—has, in fact, in a sense been sacrificed to the matter. It strikes us as possible that this has been done deliberately and on artistic principle. In connection with a romance of heredity, it may not be inappropriate to recall one of the first Lord Lytton's principles of composition. "I forced myself," he says, in giving an account of his early discipline in writing, "to resign much that would better please the taste, in order not to lose that dash and intrepidity of diction by which alone (at least in works of imagination) we can hurry the reader into passion. For art in fiction is something like art in oratory; the language it uses must often, with purpose, be rough, loose, and slovenly. *The*

evidence of impulse must preponderate over that of preparation."

The son would seem to have been influenced in his metrical art by the sire's maxim. In the description of momentary moods and subtle traits of character, he seems to deliberately prefer the method of repeated impulsive strokes or rapid dashes to that of slow and steady delineation, and is less careful of regularity of metre than of fulness of expression. The result is, that his stanzas are full of life and movement, but exhibit here and there faults of hurried execution likely to offend the cool and critical reader who does not allow himself to be caught by the rapid current of the description. Such evanescent impressions as the dreamy boyhood of Ivor, or the affectionate comradeship between him and Emmanuel, or the vague tumult of delight raised in Ivor's breast by Cordelia's letter, or the peculiar charm of Cordelia's manner, are rendered with great power and complete success; but the method is the reverse of severe and classical, and perfection of metre is often sacrificed to felicity of expression.

From the nature of the case, it is impossible to fully illustrate Lord Lytton's method; but we may hazard a quotation or two, on the understanding that in work of the kind passages produce a very different effect when detached from the context that leads up to them. We shall choose first his picture of one of Cordelia's fascinations, the grace of a sympathetic listener:—

"Her attitude diffused a soothing sense
Of gentle power in undisturbed repose.
'Twas not the posture of indifference;
Nor did the calm contour of it disclose
The rigid wariness that fears offence.
As to the bent in which its beauty grows
A wind-blown flower incessantly recurs,
So to that natural attitude of hers

Cordelia, if forced out of it by chance,
 Always relapsed, in outlines backward thrown,
 That slanted to a slight predominance
 Her figure's pure profile from throat to zone ;
 Her earnest face, with softly listening glance,
 Over her bosom bent a little down,
 And her arms folded ; arms whose perfect mould
 Revealed no angle in their rounded fold !

The strange intelligence that seemed to teach
 Not her eyes only, but the whole of her,
 To be responsive to the gaze or speech
 Of those around her, in its character
 Had combinations which escaped the reach
 Of Edelrath's endeavour to refer
 The indefinite impressions they combined
 To any marked exertion of the mind ;

Patience was in them, without condescension,
 And interest, free from curiosity ;
 They were suffused with that unstrained attention
 Which is not of the ear, nor of the eye,
 But of the temperament ; without pretension,
 Or effort, they were able to imply—
 'Dismiss the interpreter ! we need him not,
 Sympathy's native tongue is polyglot.'

Lord Lytton devotes several more stanzas to the attempt to express this impalpable grace. This is not the art of picturing in a line or a phrase, which shall reveal meaning as it were in a flash and brand it on the memory for ever. But it is art of a different kind, and it is successful. Whether the single-phrase method could succeed in

presenting anything so complex as the charm of a perfect listener is a question that can be solved only by a genius equal to such a feat of expression. We must not dogmatically say that the feat is impossible, otherwise we might be confounded by some such master as the word-artist spoken of by Mr Browning:—

"He with a 'Look you !' vents a brace of rhymes,
 And in there breaks the sudden rose herself."

'Glenaveril' is not without luminous phrases, such as the happily descriptive line in the above quotation—"the rigid wariness that fears offence ;" but Lord Lytton's power is shown rather in the description of complex states of mind

by a profusion of hints and suggestions, which together put us in possession of his meaning. Let us take, as another example, his description of the delights of imaginative reverie.

"The Imagination (that fine atmosphere
 Wherein souls breathe) is charged with vapours light,
 That rapid as a mist upon a mere,
 About the world around us weave their slight
 Sweet veil : and tho' it seem so thin and clear,
 That veil impenetrably from our sight
 Obliterates the world of real things,
 While a new world emerges from its wings :

A world with visions thronged, that overthrow
 All our fixed notions of the evident
 And possible : their fluctuations show
 No trace of effort in the accomplishment
 Of the most complicated schemes ; but flow
 In self-fulfilment smooth from one event
 On to the next : what is, and what's to be,
 As one thing and the same we seem to see :
 The slow and painful process of long years
 A single moment supersedes : between
 Thought and the object to which thought adheres
 No periods pass, no spaces intervene :
 With pulse responsive, and enraptured ears,
 Silently listening in a trance serene,
 We hear a voice to whose prophetic tone
 All things respond,—nor guess it is our own.

 A word in passing dropped, the faint sweet sound
 Of a dress rustling, a forgotten glove
 Left on a chair or fall'n upon the ground,
 A half-guessed fragrance that is felt to move
 With a mysterious influence around,
 A half-heard footfall like a half-born love,
 Or else the strayed note of some distant song,
 Dying away vague memories among ;
 Things slight and transient as all these, create
 Those sweet hallucinations of the soul
 Which force Eternity to circulate
 Round a pin's point, and enter, with its whole
 Vast troop of promised joys and inchoate
 Felicities, into the films that roll
 Their radiant falsehoods round about that vain
 And bubble world we build in our own brain."

These quotations may give the reader some idea of the energy and fulness of Lord Lytton's matter, and will serve also to illustrate his want of correctness as a metrist. The defects of the verse are obvious, and lay themselves open to the punishment of parody. But while the verse may easily be parodied, as it is easy to rhyme with such licence as the poet allows himself in the way of grammatical stops and metrical pauses, the matter has a luxuriant vitality that puts it beyond the reach of derisive imitation. A poem which stirs the imagination, informs the judgment, elevates sentiment, and quickens humorous fancy as '*Glenaveril*' does, may be forgiven many irregularities and inequalities incident to impetuous rapidity of composition. Lord Lytton must

evidently write quickly to write at his best. It would seem that he cannot give the attention necessary to correctness without chilling the ardour to which his poetry owes its best qualities.

Critical doctors will always differ as to the value of such a method. It is obviously dangerous in the case of poets with no great fluency of language and no great natural opulence of thought and fancy. But Lord Lytton does possess these gifts, and the use that he has here made of them specially commands attention in an age when the tendency of poetry is towards over-elaboration of form at the expense of vitality of substance. Whatever we may think of the method, the result is a poem of masterly breadth of conception and freshness and variety of interest.

A POLISH ELIAS.

CHAPTER I.

AN old white-bearded Jew was standing at the worm-eaten counter of his shop, measuring out coffee-beans into a twisted-up piece of newspaper.

His wife, a somewhat bulky woman of forty or thereabouts, was seated near the window, with some needlework in her hands. She was not working at this moment, but, with her head slightly on one side, was critically watching her husband's operations.

"Mendele," she said at last, when she had contemplated him for some minutes in silence, and had noted how some of the fragrant berries had escaped from their receptacle and were rolling about the dirty brick floor—"Mendele, you are spilling *all* the coffee-beans. Your hand is not as steady as it used to be."

In truth, not above a dozen berries had gone astray in the process; but there was a censorious emphasis on the word *all* which caused the old man to start apprehensively.

"Where? where?" he inquired nervously, peering down through his dingy spectacles. But his eyes had no longer the ferret-like sharpness of youth, and he had some difficulty in distinguishing the tiny truants from the general dust that surrounded them; and the operation of picking them up was tedious and irksome exceedingly, for his back, like the hand and the eyes, was no longer what it once used to be.

Rebecca Blühdorn made no attempt to assist her husband in his tedious search. With dis-

contented expression she surveyed his proceedings, and as she noted how stiff and how languid his movements had become of late, how torpid his eye, and how unsteady his hand, she shook her head more than once.

A very attentive observer might have thought that she was drawing mental comparisons between her aged spouse and some other member of the male sex, who had sharper eyes, a steadier hand, and a more elastic backbone.

Her reflections, whatever they may have been, were interrupted by the entrance of another customer, a fur-coated peasant, who asked for brandy. The peasant in question had already partaken of considerably more alcohol than was good for him; for his gait was unsteady, and his utterance was thick and indistinct. It was therefore not surprising that Mendele should have mistaken his wishes.

"Sugar-candy?" he repeated, with benevolent alacrity. "Directly—directly."

"Brandy!" screamed Rebecca into his ear. "Mendele, you are growing stone-deaf."

Soon after this two young ladies appeared on the scene, with a request for blue saracen ribbons; for Mendele Blühdorn's trade did not consist merely in spirits and groceries, but his business comprised a draper's department as well, *alias* a shelf in the back shop, where such luxuries as coarse printed calicoes, faded silk ribbons, flimsy cotton laces, and occasionally a few soiled remnants of real satin or velvet, might be found.

Of late this particular department had not been very flourishing, for customers rarely found what they wanted, and often went off grumbling to the new shop opposite, kept by a more enterprising Hebrew, whose prices were rather higher to be sure, but who was always able to produce stuffs and trimmings exactly like those worn in the residence—two years previously.

On this occasion also, Mendele failed to satisfy the fair daughters of the village postmaster, who had come to him in quest of azure ribbons wherewith to bind their frizzy curls.

First he brought out the box of green ribbons by mistake, and when he did find the right colour at last, the stock proved to have run very low, and of what remained, some ribbons were too broad and others were too narrow, and none of them hit off precisely the exact hue necessary to contrast favourably with tawny locks, and thereby attract the admiring attention of the other sex.

In high dudgeon the two damsels flounced out of the shop, only to make place to an incensed cook, who was returning the butter purchased half an hour previously. "Her mistress would have none of it," she roughly explained; "it was positively rancid—stinking; and he would just be pleased to return the money on the spot."

"Mendele," said Rebecca, as soon as the shop was again empty, putting down her work and approaching her husband, "you have not made a single good *Geschäft* (bargain) this day; the trade is going ill."

"Not more than usual," said the old man, peevishly. "*Geschäfts* are not to be made every day; and butter gets rancid from time to time when there are not enough

buyers, for March is always a slack season with us——"

"It need not be slack," said Rebecca, persistently; "nor would the butter be allowed to get rancid, if there were some one who understood how to praise his wares, and knew how to keep a customer from reaching the shop-door. But it all comes because you are no longer young, Mendele."

"Did I ever say that I was young?" exclaimed the husband; and as he said it, the word "young" had a strange foreign sound in his ears, and there came over him a sort of indistinct feeling that he never had known what it was to be young.

In truth, Mendele Blühdorn never had been young: there had not been either time or opportunity for his youth to develop. His whole life from thirteen to sixty-nine had been lived out within the grimy walls of his dingy shop, where strings of dried figs and of toadstools, smoked fish, and tallow candles in bunches, hung in picturesque medley from the rafters, and where jars of salted butter, sugar-candy, and lollipops stood ranged beside bottles containing various coloured and various flavoured *Wódki* or spirits.

This shop was Mendele Blühdorn's whole world; and looking back now upon his long life, he could scarcely have found a reminiscence that was unconnected, or so to say flavoured, with rancid butter or tallow-dips. At the age when eyes are usually bright and cheeks are rosy, Mendele's eyes had long since become as dull as those of the pickled herrings in the barrel, and his complexion as pasty as the tallow candles which he sold. He hardly seemed aware that there was another world outside his world, or that there were other perfumes beyond the

aromas of salt fish and potent cheeses.

For the last fifteen years of his life Mendele Blühdorn had never quitted his dwelling, save to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath; and as this building stood but a few doors off from his own, the circle in which he moved was very narrow indeed.

Rebecca was his second wife; and the children she had brought him, as well as those of his first marriage, were all suitably provided for—some by matrimony, others by death.

Rebecca was twenty-seven years younger than her husband; and she had of late often reminded him of this circumstance. To-day she was more than usually persistent in harping upon the subject.

"In fact," she went on, after a pause, "you are getting old, Mendele; it is time you were beginning to think of your age at last."

"Everybody gets old some time or other," answered Mendele, wearily; "and thinking about it will not mend the matter anyway."

The old Jew would fain have closed the subject by absorbing himself in the rearrangement of a drawer of washing-starch; but his Rebecca had resolved that he should both speak and think further of the matter to-day, for she was of opinion that very much indeed could be mended thereby, so she said—

"You were sixty-nine last November, Mendele, and you know what the Prophet says!"

"There have been a sight of prophets, and they have all of them said many things one way and another," said Mendele, rather testily. "How should I know which of them you are meaning just now?"

"Thy days shall be threescore

and ten," pronounced Rebecca, in an oracular tone of voice.

There being no answer to this encouraging statement, she repeated still more emphatically—"Threescore and ten."

"Well?" said Mendele, as nothing in the way of repartee occurred to him.

"And so it is time you were beginning to detach yourself from this nether earth, where you are no longer needed, and proceeding to prepare yourself for a better world."

"I am never missing from the synagogue on the Sabbath," said the husband, in surprise, "and I keep all the feasts as directed; how else should I prepare?"

But Rebecca evidently took a much higher view of the septuagenarian's duties.

"That is not sufficient," she explained. "Now that you have almost reached the prescribed term of life, every day, every hour should be a preparation for what must now be close at hand. Remember that it is said, 'He will come like a thief in the night.'"

"But I cannot sit with folded hands till the *Malach Hamoves* (Angel of Death) appears to summon me," he answered. "You know I cannot; I have the shop to mind."

"That is just it: you should give up the shop, shake yourself free from all such sordid cares unworthy of a man who will shortly repose in Abraham's bosom."

"Give up the shop!" gasped Mendele.

"You should gird up your loins, anoint your brow, and take your staff in your hand," went on Rebecca, developing the plan she had conceived, with inspired pathos; "you should wander thus to the hallowed country where our forefathers rest. Near the valley of Je-

hoshaphat, where on the great day all men shall be called together, you can await the sounding of the angel's trumpet. There, at the place where Solomon once dwelt in all his splendour, you will find a fitting employment for your few remaining days in weeping over the departed glory of the house of Israel."

"To Jerusalem!" exclaimed Mendele, aghast at the boldness of his wife's suggestion. "I should go to Jerusalem?"

"Yes, to Jerusalem," said Rebecca, relieved that the decisive word which had so long been hovering on her lips was spoken at last. "Why should you not go to Jerusalem? Scores of holy men have gone thither to end their days, and have found there consolation and peace. You will find the same."

"But the shop?" objected Mendele, still very much bewildered. "How can I leave the shop?"

"You will have to leave it at any rate before long; what matters doing so a few days sooner?" said his persistent consort.

"But you cannot keep it alone," said the husband, helplessly. "How should I leave you alone, Rebecca, my soul?" But his "soul" answered drily that Jehovah cared for the widows and orphans, and that her faith was strong, and she was willing to put her trust in Providence.

"Besides," she added, as an after-thought, "I know of a young man who would be willing to take the place of shopman."

The entrance of fresh customers put an end to the discussion for the moment; but while serving out lump-sugar, or measuring yards of calico, the old Jew felt as though he were in a dream. It seemed as if a large bell had got into his head and was ringing incessantly, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! go to Jerusalem!"

CHAPTER II.

The subject once broached by the enterprising Rebecca, was not allowed to be dropped again. She returned to the charge so often and so persistently that she gradually accustomed her submissive spouse to accept her suggestion as an irrevocable decision. Soon it became no longer a question of "Will you go to Jerusalem?" but of "When shall you start?" And so it came to be decided that as soon as winter was quite over and spring had set in, Mendele Blühdorn was to start off on his long journey.

When he had once signified his assent to the proposed arrangement, and when his resolution had been made public, Mendele began to experience a sort of foretaste of

the celestial joys in store for him. Hitherto he had played no particular part in his native place, nor even in his own family. Both his wives had been stronger-minded than himself, and had henpecked him accordingly. Also, although a fairly intelligent shopman and more than a match for any Christian customer, he had never shone in any particular capacity. There were wiser Jews, and wittier Jews, and Jews who cheated better, and others who had a greater reputation of sanctity in the place; whereas Mendele had always been considered to be just a commonplace, average Jew.

It was true that his trade had not improved of late, and Rebecca's insinuations that he had made bet-

ter bargains at forty than at sixty were not absolutely without foundation. Perhaps it was that his faculties, along with some of his wares, had gathered mildew in all these long years. He had grown accustomed to hear himself called *Beheimo* (stupid-head) by his sharper-witted wife, and scarcely resented this epithet.

Now, however, all this was altered. Mendele was changed, or perhaps the change was in the inhabitants of Blotatyn, for they looked at him with different eyes.

What had been slowness before had now become dignity, and what had seemed to them like stupidity was but the lofty indifference of an immortal soul on the edge of the grave; in fact, though still actually clothed in ragged *kaftan* and slipshod slippers, Mendele Blühdorn was already invested in the supernatural glory of halo and wings, and regarded in the light of a disembodied spirit. Virtues which no one had hitherto discovered in him were now brought to light, and lament was made over the death of so just a man. The widow *in spe* received visits of condolence from the best Hebrew families of the place.

All this was naturally very sweet to Mendele Blühdorn, for he was enjoying a privilege which is given to few mortals—namely, to stand beside their open graves and hear all the fine things which are said of them. He therefore soon fell gracefully into his part of disembodied spirit, and thought what a clever woman was his Rebecca to have had such a grand idea. It almost made him forget the many years in which she had had nothing but sour faces and sharp words for him. Now her words were like sugar and honey, and her face like a smiling full moon. On one occasion, however, she thought it seem-

ly to drop a few tears over the approaching separation; but she never repeated this experiment, for the soft-hearted Mendele, overcome by the sight of her distress, was nearly relinquishing his pious project, which had the effect of instantly drying her tears and causing her to exclaim—

“No, no, Mendele; far be it from me to oppose your holy wish. Go in peace, and the God of Abraham will console me in my lonely widowhood.”

The young man who had so obligingly signified his willingness to step into Mendele Blühdorn's shoes was already installed as a member of the household, in order to be initiated into the mysteries of the trade before the old man's departure.

His name was Golde Safran, and he had a fresh colour and flaming red curls. From the very outset he displayed an extraordinary genius for shopkeeping. He rearranged the little window in a totally new fashion, with a most effective pattern of raisins and almonds in the centre, framed in by alternate bars of white and brown soap; and he bullied the peasants and flattered the town damsels with equal success. No peasant was ever allowed to leave the shop without having purchased at least twice as much *Wódki* as he had originally intended to do; and when the ladies did not find what they came to seek, Golde Safran was sure to make them take something else in its stead. His system was about as follows: If, for instance, a customer inquired for red pepper, he would answer briskly, “Red pepper, madam? Well, not precisely red pepper, but we have first-rate French chocolate and the finest bottled capers; with which shall I serve you?”

In the same way he sent away peasants in search of blue calico,

furnished with scarlet knitting-wool, and shoe-blackening was made a successful substitute for tooth-brushes.

Mendele Blühdorn therefore saw that he could go to heaven with an easy mind, for his widow's prospects were fairly secured.

It was on a fine April afternoon that Mendele left his native town *en route* for Paradise, *vid* Jerusalem. When the hour of parting drew near, his heart almost failed him, and it wanted but the shadow of an excuse to make him draw back at the eleventh hour.

He looked round the dingy little shop where all his life had been spent, and he felt himself strangely moved as he thought that he should never see it again. That bunch of tallow-dips which he had hung up with his own hands, he would never take it down again; he should not see the end of that large Swiss cheese. He looked down into the barrel containing salt herrings. Only a few of them remained at the bottom of the cask, for the supply always ran low at this season. The flattened fish seemed to gaze up at him with a mournful expression in their salt-encrusted eyes, and to say to him, "Never again, Mendele!—never again!"

But his faltering resolution was not given the chance of a loophole of escape; not for one moment was he allowed to forget that he belonged already to a better world. With pious alacrity all the arrangements for his departure were pushed through. Even before the appointed hour he found all his friends assembled before his door, to give him their conduct as far as the nearest toll-bar; for, like most fervent pilgrims, Mendele was to perform the greatest part of his journey on foot. It was now the end of April, and it was calculated

that by midsummer he would be able without over-fatigue to reach his destination.

The spring had been late in coming that year, and the roads were by no means dry as yet. The Jews, who had all donned their best *kastans* in Mendele's honour, had to lift up their skirts, while with slippered feet they sought to pick their way daintily through the mire.

It was a stately procession thus assembled to celebrate the funeral of a living man. All those who had been Mendele's friends during his life, were now anxious to give him a last mark of goodwill, and most of those who had not been his friends before, wished to give expression to the sentiment that all former malice and bad-will must vanish like smoke in the presence of Death.

As when engaged in their devotions, every Jew was muffled in his black and silver *tales* or death-scarf, and foremost in the procession walked the chief rabbi, murmuring prayers for the dying as he dodged about the road from side to side in a zigzag fashion, trying to avoid the worst pools and the deepest mud.

As in the synagogue, too, the women were excluded from the ceremony, not even the interesting widow was admitted to the ranks. She walked at a little distance behind the others, and the fresh-coloured young man with the flaming ringlets lent her the support of his arm.

In this manner the toll-bar was reached, and the last words of prayer, blessing, and farewell were spoken. All crowded round Mendele to wish him a long farewell, and many of them kissed his hand or the hem of his garment. All were anxious to do honour to this holy man who was shortly to repose in Abraham's bosom.

It was decidedly the most triumphant moment in Mendele Blühdorn's life; he felt like Elias going up to heaven, and the soft muddy road seemed to his touch like clouds beneath his feet!

This ecstatic frame of mind lasted for some twenty minutes, during which Mendele Blühdorn walked on alone slowly but steadily. The road led slightly uphill, and, unaccustomed as he was to walking, the progress he made was but slow. When he had reached the top of the incline, he was obliged to pause to recover breath; and leaning on his oaken staff, Mendele turned and looked back a last time towards his native town.

Never, since he could remember, had he been thus far outside his birthplace, so that the sight of it seen collectively, made up as it were into a picture before his eyes, struck him with a sort of surprise. It was all at once strange and familiar to him.

Down there on the road, which slanted away from where he stood, he could still descry the black-robed figures of the brethren who had assisted at his funeral procession: hardly larger than black

beetles they appeared at this distance, but the silver stripes of their death-scarves still glittered in the rays of the setting sun. The peaceful lake looked vividly blue, and the brick walls of the soldiers' barracks gleamed burning red in the evening glow. The old Hebrew burying-ground, where five of his children reposed, he could also see as he stood; it lay framed in a garland of pollard-willow trees, which shimmered with the tender green of early spring. There, too, his father and grandfather lay buried: they had both died in the prime of life, before there could have been any question of going to Jerusalem. Then Mendele examined the streets and houses of the little town, and tried to make out his own little shop. But he failed to distinguish it, for the overtowering wall of the neighbouring synagogue had already hidden it from sight.

Then Mendele Blühdorn felt his blear old eyes grow suddenly dim, and the whole picture grew blurred and indistinct; and he turned and went down the hill on the other side, walking on and on and ever onward, with his face towards the east.

CHAPTER III.

Mendele halted to rest the first night at a neighbouring village whose name was familiar to him, and there he found ready hospitality among his Hebrew brethren.

The following night he rested at other villages whose names were less familiar, but where also, as soon as his errand was known, he was treated with every mark of deference and respect.

Sometimes he got a lift in a cart a few miles along the road, but in general he walked, out of economical as well as pious reasons.

At first his limbs were cramped from long disuse, and he advanced but slowly. Two hours was the utmost limit of what he could manage, and he was forced to rest frequently on the way. But hardly had he been a week on his journey, when he could accomplish twice that distance without any inconvenience; and the further he advanced, in the same proportion did he feel his pedestrian powers growing on him. His appetite became voracious, and was no longer to be satisfied by a mere

crust of bread seasoned with garlic; and Mendele often thought that it was lucky that Rebecca was not there to control his rations. The wind which swept across the country, snapping off rotten twigs and blowing away last year's dead leaves, seemed likewise to be blowing all sorts of dust and cobwebs out of his brain, leaving his head clearer than it had ever been before. His eyesight, too, which had weakened so much of late in the stuffy atmosphere of the grocer's shop, now underwent a similar improvement, and long, long before Mendele had reached the gates of the holy city, he had put his spectacles in his pocket. Another man would probably have chucked his eye-glasses into the nearest river, in the excess of his joy at finding a lost sense suddenly restored to him; but Mendele was a Jew—and no Jew, even when standing on the edge of the grave, ever throws anything away.

And his eyes saw many things which were new and strange to him, all of which came upon him like revelations.

For several days his road lay through a mighty beech-forest, and Mendele had never been in a forest before. There were no woods round Blotatyn; and even had there been, it was not likely that Mendele should ever have thought of visiting them.

This forest was a very wonderful place indeed. It was just now waking up from its long winter sleep, and there was an exuberance of bursting life in every direction. Pink and blue hepaticas, anemones and violets, golden crocuses, and pale snowdrops were sprouting on the forest carpet, pushing aside or piercing through the withered leaves in their impatience to reach the surface. Every tree and bush was covered with myriads of ten-

der green buds, all swelling and bursting under the sun's warm kiss. Delicately fretted lady-ferns and crimped hart's-tongues were uncoiling their dainty fronds in the forest glades, and the rich layer of moss which coated the granite rocks had passed from bronze to bright emerald green. Mendele bent down to test its quality between his fingers. He had never seen velvet of this sort before.

"Four florins a yard, at the very least," he murmured, in wondering admiration. "Ah, if I had only had velvet like this in the shop at home, what a splendid profit I might have made!" He fell into a gentle reverie, till some new wonder claimed his attention.

Not only the vegetable but also the animal world was waking up to life within the forest. Red-coated squirrels were leaping from branch to branch, startled hares and timid roe-deer ran to and fro across the path, weasels and badgers peeped out at Mendele from their holes, spotted snakes and lizards were creeping out cautiously from their winter hiding-places, pale-yellow butterflies had burst from their shrouding cocoons, bumble-bees and large blue bottle flies buzzed noisily through the air.

Every bird and beast, every insect and reptile, was busy preparing its nest and its lair, and the joyful music which waked the forest echoes, all spoke of life and resurrection to this old man who was walking towards his grave.

Now that he was on his way to leave the world, the old Jew began for the first time to realise what life really was, and how many different kinds of life there are.

In bending aside a branch of flowery hawthorn which crossed

his path, Mendele saw a tiny round nest containing four dazzling white eggs.

"Just like the finest blanched almonds, eighty-five kreutzers a lb.," was his admiring verdict.

And many other pictures he saw as his journey advanced; for now his direction had changed, and led him southward through strange countries of which he had not even heard. He passed through narrow mountain-gorges, where the rocks were piled up so high that he could hardly catch a glimpse of the blue sky above; and then he came on to vast plains, whose monotony, as far as the eye could reach, was unbroken by either tree or stone, and where fierce-looking shepherds, with their large wolf-like dogs, were guarding their flocks of ragged sheep. And stranger figures yet came in his way: men with gaudy turbans on their heads, and embroidered scarves round their waists; and women whose faces were

shrouded behind floating veils. And as he advanced still further, there were wild troops of horsemen, whose speed was like that of the whistling wind beside them, and who hurled their shining javelins through the air as they hunted the light-footed gazelle or the wild goat of the plains.

As he approached his journey's end, Mendele Blühdorn saw many things which bore familiar names, but whose appearance was strange to him. In the stately trees, laden with swelling fruit, beneath which he sometimes paused to rest, how could he recognise the tasteless figs which he had only seen, dry and dusty, strung upon cord, and hanging in musty festoons from the rafters of his little shop! Nor had he known before that the olive-oil which he used to sell at home, judiciously adulterated by equal quantities of linseed, found its origin in the sad grey-tinted groves which decked the hills near the gates of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

Mendele had no difficulty in finding out an appropriate lodging in the city of Solomon; for Hebrews were numerous in the place, and bed and board were often inquired for by Jews who, like himself, had come hither to await the Angel of Death.

The old man engaged a sleeping-closet by the week; for, with one foot in the grave, it would have been folly to bind himself down for a longer period in advance. His food was also contracted for by the week, for the same reason—though he was told that it would have come considerably cheaper to make arrangements by the month.

Mendele felt as if he were playing a game of skill with the *Malach*

Hamoves, and he was determined not to let that pale spectre gain any unnecessary advantage over him.

Death, however, did not come as quickly as he had been led to anticipate; and when six weeks had gone by without his having remarked any unmistakable signs of his approaching dissolution, Mendele Blühdorn began to think that after all it might be a better bargain in the end to contract for board and lodging by the month.

Soon after his arrival he had despatched the following letter to his wife at home:—

"REBECCA, my dearest soul!—
The God of Israel has been pleased

to guide my steps in peace and safety as far as the gates of the holy city. He brought me up out of the miry clay, and established my goings. Like Moses on the banks of the Red Sea, He caused the waters to open before me. I crossed the Bosphorus by a cheap opportunity; and though my heart felt sick exceedingly as the bark swayed to and fro, I knew I should not perish, for the Lord was watching over me. He rendered my enemies powerless against me: only once did an infidel hound of a Turk pick my pocket of eight piastres, as I slept in the shade of a pomegranate-tree. May Jehovah curse him, and his sons and his grandsons! and may they all be buried in nameless graves!

"I pray the God of Abraham daily to watch over my dearest Rebecca, and to guard over the

interests of the lonely widow. How goes the trade at home? and does the young man still continue to give satisfaction? Have you raised the price of Cuba coffee as I advised?

"The *Malach Hamoves* is slow in coming, but I hope for a speedy release from my earthly trammels; for it makes my heart bleed to think of the money it costs to nourish my wretched body in this hallowed city. Provisions of all kinds are ruinously dear in the city of Solomon; and as for the butter, I dare not name you the price! This is my only trouble; for my heart it is clean, like that of the just, and I am at peace with all men.

"Farewell till we meet again in Abraham's bosom.—Your loving husband till death,

"MENDELE BLÜHDORN."

CHAPTER V.

A fine sunset evening early in October found Mendele sitting at the foot of a ruined wall, plumed in a brown study.

He was sitting not far from the spot called *Kotel Hamearba*, or Place of Lamentation, for this is the site of the ancient temple; and hither the children of Israel repair once a-week to indulge in plaintive lamentations over the departed glory of their house.

Men and women come here alike; children and babes in arms are brought to swell the mournful chorus, in hopes of touching the heart of their long-expected Messiah. The long-bearded elders read aloud the doleful prophecies of the Old Testament, while the wives and children fill up each pause with appropriate howls. This pious ceremony was concluded for to-day, and the congregation of mourners

had dispersed homewards, their wailing voices gradually losing themselves in the distance.

Mendele alone had lingered behind, outside the walls of the Place of Lamentation. Perhaps he wanted to indulge in a little more private howling of his own, or maybe it was pleasant to sit here in the growing twilight and gaze at the prospect before him.

The western sky was streaked all purple and crimson, and the setting sun had almost sunk out of sight behind the Mount of Olives, like an abdicating monarch laying down his crown on the top of the hill. Of the straggling trees which, sole survivors of the ancient grove, dot the rising ground, only the topmost branches were still touched by the departing rays, and shone brightly orange in contrast to the rest, which had resumed their ha-

bitual tint of lifeless grey. The deep and gloomy valley of Jehoshaphat straight below his feet was already clothed in shadows; only here and there some ancient tombstone loomed white in the twilight.

Mendele had seated himself on a fallen block of stone, his back comfortably propped against the outside wall. The Scriptural lamentations still rang in his ears as he sat thus resting; but, from the subject of Solomon and the departed glory of Israel, his mind had wandered off unconsciously to a more personal source of regret.

"'Her gates are sunk into the ground; He hath destroyed and broken her bars,'" he quoted from the prophet Jeremiah, while gazing at the stone fragments around him.

"'Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver ———'" Here Mendele made a pause, as something in the words suggested another train of thought.

Yes, he was quite sure that the butter sold at Jerusalem could not possibly agree with any one's digestion; it had certainly not agreed with his own. "Rancid butter, and at such an unheard-of price," he murmured. "It goes against my conscience to countenance such improvidence."

The price—that was what rankled in his mind so sorely, to the extent of troubling his devotions. The inquiring spirit of his nation once awakened on this point, had led the old Hebrew to make the butter-supplies at Jerusalem the subject of a special investigation. He had tested the correctness of his surmise in every possible manner, and had come to the conclusion that the supply of that article was by no means equal to the demand, and the price, in consequence, nearly triple that which he had

been used to receive in his native town. He thought with regretful longing of the large earthen jars of salted butter which must now be standing on the second shelf of his old shop. And to say that they would be sold for such a miserable figure, whereas if transported over here, so magnificent a profit might be realised! It made his heart yearn to think of it.

"'Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission,'" he recited, rocking his body backwards and forwards in anguish of spirit.

His hooked fingers had been feverishly toying with a piece of stone picked up beside him, probably a chip from the outer temple-wall. Mechanically he threw it from him into the valley below. It bounded down the sharp incline, and he watched its progress till it finally disappeared in the shadows. It must have reached the bottom of the valley, he thought. How near it lay to his feet, this awful vale, where, on the last day, all mankind shall be assembled by the blast of the angel's trumpet! And it had been entirely with a view to this mighty gathering that Mendele had come hither to Jerusalem, which lay so conveniently near to the place of action. While his less fortunate brethren would have to hurry hither from all parts of the globe, he would have nothing to do but to saunter over quite leisurely from his grave to the place of rendezvous, and would have no difficulty in securing one of the most advantageous places.

The old Jew peeped down into the shadowy vale, as though trying to decide on the exact spot where he should take his stand, and a gentle sense of triumph swelled his breast as he saw himself in spirit standing in the very foremost ranks.

Old Mendele Blühdorn savoured

the sweetness of this thought the more thoroughly, as in his whole long life he had never yet had a good place. At school, he remembered, he had always been one of the last; and in the Blotatyn synagogue he had sat for more than fifty years behind a pillar in one of the backward rows. Once, too, when a band of strolling players had come to his native town, he had got a gallery seat, where, by standing on tiptoe and craning his neck, he could only just catch sight of the heads and busts of the players. It had been very fatiguing, Mendele recollected; and to this day he did not know whether the beautiful *prima donna* with the red satin body had on a blue or a yellow skirt. On that same occasion, as he likewise remembered, Jacob Rabner, the rich innkeeper, and his proud wife, had taken their places in the third row, straight behind where sat the military and the gentlefolks. Mendele was not an ill-natured man; but Jacob Rabner had never been very friendly to him, and was one of the few Hebrew citizens who had refrained from joining the funeral procession to the toll-bar: so our hero may be excused if he felt a little pardonable satisfaction in anticipating the day when their rôles should be reversed. Jacob had never even thought of going to Jerusalem—he would not have dreamt of leaving his inn in other hands; so on the decisive day it would be his turn to stand behind, while the hitherto obscure Mendele would be placed in front. He smiled a little as he pictured to himself the proud innkeeper reaching the valley, footsore and panting, with his *tales* all awry, and with scarcely adjusted winding-sheet.

"Jacob is stout," he said to himself: "it will take him a long time to reach here."

Hitherto Mendele had never murmured at the obscure places assigned to him by fate—they had seemed to him quite natural; but after all, every dog must have its day—and his day was to be the day of judgment.

Yes; there was no doubt that his coming to Jerusalem had been a most excellent arrangement, and he felt really grateful to his Rebecca for having suggested it. His only source of regret was the relative geographical positions of Blotatyn and Jehoshaphat. If, for instance, the momentous valley had lain close to his native town, why, then, he might have gone on keeping his shop quite comfortably till the last, and yet have had no difficulty in securing a place at the Doomsday gathering. This was certainly a pity—a great pity indeed. The instinct of speculation, never quite deficient in any Hebrew, was busy at work within him, showing him a new field of action, and suggesting the possibility of unhopèd-for riches.

Here were two spots on the globe, far apart in distance, but evidently designed to complete each other. On one side a butterless town, on the other rich stores of the golden grease which were wanting here, wasting their sweetness on the desert air of Blotatyn, and turning rancid for want of purchasers.

It needed but a connecting-link to effect a happy union, and to make of these two barren existences one beautiful whole; and for a moment Mendele's old heart beat faster, as, forgetting his near proximity to the grave, he imagined himself to be that link. A profit of fifty per cent was clearly to be made here, even deducting the charges of carriage and custom-house. It made the old Jew positively giddy to think of it.

He leant back exhausted against the ruined wall, and while his eyes wandered mechanically over the site where once had stood the Temple in all its magnificence, his mental vision showed him another edifice, a temple all built of shining yellow butter, which turned into gold at the touch of a magician!

“‘How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!’” he muttered to himself, as he rose to go home, for the sun had now quite disappeared behind the Olive Mount; but it was not clear whether he was referring to his personal losses or to those of the house of Israel.

CHAPTER VI.

Summer had come round again, for it was now more than a year since Mendele Blühdorn had left his native town. All this time Rebecca had received no decisive intelligence to assure her that she was a widow. Yet she had every reason to suppose that her husband's decease was already an accomplished fact, for the last few months had brought her no word of tidings from him.

The two or three notes he had sent her during the first months of his arrival at Jerusalem had been followed by unbroken silence, so she very naturally concluded that her husband was no longer in the land of the living.

But Rebecca was anxious to have her widowhood openly and publicly proclaimed, for not until she had gone through the recognised forms of mourning could she proceed to the accomplishment of certain other plans which she had very much at heart.

Before taking another spouse, she must have reliable evidence of her first husband's decease; and this was the subject she was discussing with much interest on this July evening as she paced the country road outside the town.

Her companion was Golde Saffran, the young man with the fresh colour and the fiery ringlets. It was the Sabbath-day, so the shop was of course closed, and Rebecca

had put on her second-best dress, and had come out to take the air along with her youthful swain.

Walking was not much in this lady's line as a rule, for she had not grown any lighter since our story opened; but on this particular occasion the two parties interested were anxious to get out of earshot of the town-folk.

“Yes,” Rebecca was saying, reflectively, “it is now more than seven months since his last letter came. There can be no manner of doubt about the matter. If no news comes by the next mail, I must write myself to the magistrates over there, and ask them to send me the certificate of his death. I cannot think what Mendele can have been about,” she went on, in an aggrieved manner, “not to have made arrangements to have his death reported immediately. He might have guessed at the inconvenience this uncertainty would cause me.”

“It is cruel in him to have delayed my happiness so long,” murmured Golde tenderly, pressing the fat widow's arm within his own.

“It puts a woman in such an awkward position,” continued Rebecca, looking down at her green silk gown, “not to know when to begin to wear her weeds. My black dress has been lying ready these six months and more, and I

had thought to have wellnigh worn it out by this time."

"And I had hoped to see the new signboard put up ere this," said the lover, ardently. "I went to look at it yesterday; the paint is quite dry. You have no idea how beautiful it looks, my Rebecca! Yellow letters upon a blue ground, GOLDE AND REBECCA SAFRAN, *Spirit-dealers, Grocers, and Drapers*. How sweet our names look thus joined together!"

"Hush!" said the matron, coyly. "Do not speak so loud; some one might overhear it."

But there was no one to overhear save the frogs that were croaking in the marsh alongside, or the storks that were flying homewards to roost. The dusty road lay deserted before them but for one solitary figure approaching down the hill towards the toll-bar. But neither of the lovers took any notice of this figure as they turned to go home.

The summer twilight had set in, and it was rapidly growing dark: soon the first star that appeared in the sky would inform them that the Sabbath-day was at an end, and that they were at liberty to resume their trade. The engrossing subject which they had been discussing, agreeably diversified by amorous philandering, had led the couple farther than had been intended; but if they hastened their steps, they might still hope to sell some pounds of sugar or coffee yet that evening.

Golde Safran took down the shutters and unlocked the door; then he entered the shop, kicking aside the discarded signboard with the name of Mendele Blühdorn, which had been removed some weeks ago. That name could no longer have any place on earth, save on a grey headstone.

Golde at once busied himself

in dusting and putting to rights the jars and bottles on the shelf, while Rebecca began to trim the lamp which hung from the ceiling. She had some difficulty in making it burn, and the shop was still in semi-darkness when another figure stepped over the threshold.

An old man, leaning on a thick oaken staff, had come up the street some minutes after Golde and Rebecca. On reaching the shop-door, he had stared up in amazement at the vacant place where the signboard used to hang, but another glance had convinced him that this was indeed the house he sought. Even in the dim twilight he could not mistake the rotten shutters leaning against the wall, nor the uneven brick steps which led up to the door.

Neither Rebecca nor Golde could distinguish his features clearly as he stood looking round the shop with wistful eyes, resting his gaze on every article in turn, from the pointed sugar-loaves to the spirit-bottles on the shelf, and back again to the barrel of pickled herrings in the corner, greeting each one in turn as an old acquaintance.

"With what can I serve you?" asked Golde at last, seeing his customer's eyes roaming thus aimlessly about the shop. "Some of our finest Mocha coffee? or first-rate Swiss cheese, freshly arrived?"

"Rebecca!" said the figure, in a low, hoarse voice.

"I am Rebecca," said the matron, turning up the flame of the little oil-lamp, and looking harder at the stranger.

"Do you not know me, Rebecca?"

The light now fell on his face, and with a cry Rebecca recognised the features of her defunct husband.

"It is his ghost!" she gasped. "I knew that he must be dead!"

She was nearly fainting, and the fiery-haired young man had to sustain her with his arm.

"I am not dead," said Mendele, somewhat shamefacedly, for he felt that he had not done what had been expected of him. "But I have come back, Rebecca. The *Malach Hamoves* was over-long in appearing, and I was wasting my time over there consuming the bread of idleness——"

"You have come back—you have come back alive, Mendele! *Wai geschrien!*¹ Oh that I should have lived to see this day!" cried Rebecca in piercing accents, as soon as she had grasped the full meaning of the situation. "And do you mean to say," she continued, indignantly—"do you mean to say that you have forfeited the merit of your long pilgrimage to the holy city? You will not sleep by the side of your forefathers!"

"I shall sleep in my own bed again," said Mendele, doggedly. "Wherefore should I pay eighty kreutzers a-week for a filthy couch at Jerusalem, while my place at home is standing empty?"

"And, pray, what do you mean to do now that you have come back?" said the still incensed Rebecca.

"What I did before I went. I shall go on keeping my shop as before——"

"Your shop!" now exclaimed the fresh-coloured young man, who for many months past had been accustomed to regard it as *his* shop, and he turned pale with a horrible emotion.

"But you are too old, Mendele!" cried Rebecca wildly, in a last desperate attempt to ward off this dreadful nightmare which had come upon her thus unexpectedly,—"you are too old! Seventy-one

you will be in autumn; and the Prophet says, 'Thy days shall be——,'"

"The Prophet has made a wrong shot in my case, anyway," put in Mendele, drily, "for I feel a long way further off death than I did two years ago. I may live and rejoice for many a day yet to come."

But the prospect contained in his words was too much for the sensitive Rebecca, and she had sunk down on the nearest chair, while hysterical sobs shook her ample bosom.

"Why do you weep, Rebecca, my dove?" said Mendele Blühdorn. "Have you no word of welcome for your husband who has come back to you?"

"I am weeping for your wretched soul, Mendele," sobbed his high-minded wife. "Oh that a man with one foot in heaven should be base enough to return to the earth again!"

Next morning the inhabitants of Blotatyn were surprised by seeing the discarded signboard with the name of Mendele Blühdorn hanging again at its former place over the shop-door, and the news that Mendele himself had come back in the flesh spread like wild-fire through the town.

The inhabitants of Blotatyn were not only surprised, they were also aggrieved at this unexpected termination to the drama of the Polish Elias. He had cheated them out of their admiration and veneration under false pretences, and this is a sort of cheating which even a Jew cannot countenance. Loudest of all in his righteous indignation was the young man with the fresh colour and the fiery locks, for was he not the greatest loser by this unexpected resurrection?

¹ Literally, "Let us cry woe!"—a frequent cry of distress of the Jews.

Stripped of the halo which he had proved himself so unworthy to wear, Mendele Blühdorn sank back contentedly into his former insignificant character. It is ignominious to have to record that the prospect of spending a few more peaceful years behind his worm-eaten counter had finally outweighed the proud hope of securing a foremost place on the judgment-day. Jacob Rabner was free to win the race after all, as far as Mendele was concerned.

Other people have discovered before him that it is better to be a living ass than a dead lion!

The aged Elias had been right in saying that he was a long way off dying yet. His lengthy pilgrimage, and the pedestrian exercise it had entailed, had freshened up his faculties and put renewed vigour into his constitution. His eye was brighter, his carriage more erect, and his hand steadier than it had been for years previously. He had in fact taken out a new lease of life, and returned to Blotatyn twice the man he had been

before. He lived to the age of ninety-three, and it was his Rebecca who preceded him into the land of shadows after all.

Nor was this the only benefit Mendele reaped from his expedition to Jerusalem, which, if it had turned out a failure from the spiritual point of view, was undoubtedly as great a success from the commercial as well as the sanatory aspect.

The branch of trade hitherto so sorely neglected in that town was now provided for by Mendele Blühdorn's solicitude, and henceforward there was a connecting-link which bound the distant Polish village to the city of Solomon.

From time to time a bulky cask was conveyed by the Blotatyn carrier to the nearest railway station, and whosoever took the trouble to read the address written thereon in Mendele Blühdorn's cramped and crooked handwriting, could assure himself that its destination was Jerusalem, and salted butter its contents.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS IN CHINA.

A CHAPTER OF CHINESE TRAVEL.

So much attention is at present being directed to the subject of educational high pressure, that it may be interesting to glance at the full development of the system in the oldest civilisation of our era—in the empire which prides itself on being the most literary in the world—namely, China.

One of the objects of chief interest in Peking is the famed Examination Hall, where once in three years all the students who have succeeded in taking degrees at the great examinations in their provincial cities, assemble to try and pass the higher standard which admits them to the much-coveted rank of Tsin-Sze—*i.e.*, advanced scholars.

Anything more dismally dreary and dilapidated than this great theatre of national learning, could not be imagined. At its best it seems specially designed for discomfort, but as the examinations are only held here triennially, the place is allowed between whiles to fall into utter decay; and a fine crop of nettles and coarse weeds, and a multitude of broken water-jars, give the crowning touches of dreariness to the whole place.

This so-called "hall" is the facsimile of the Examination Hall which we went to see at Canton, and of one at Foochow, of which I only cared to inspect the roofs, as seen from the city wall (I believe there are similar places in every provincial capital). The name "hall" is altogether misleading. It is simply a very large walled enclosure, in the centre of which stands the house where lodge the ten examiners and the

two Imperial examiners. With the exception of the broad central road, the whole remaining space is filled with rows and rows of tiny cells, each about three feet square. Each row has its distinctive name, and each cell is numbered, so that any man could be summoned if requisite. I cannot call these rows streets, because they all face the same way—each looking into the blank back of the next cell, so that there may be nothing to distract the attention of the candidates. The cells have no doors, so the whole front is open, and special officers are always on the watch to prevent any sort of communication between the men. Other watchmen are posted on the central building, and on towers at the corners of the walls, to see that no one from outside attempts to assist those within.

There are ten thousand of these cells (which might more fitly be termed pigsties). Each is built with two grooves in the wall, to allow for the insertion of two wooden boards, one of which acts as a very hard seat, the other (which is slipped into its place after the student is seated) forms the table on which he is to work. These two boards, and a large earthenware water-jar, are the sole furnishings of the cell, which is so small that a stout man, clothed in the usual wadded garments, must find it impossible even to turn round; and his only rest at night consists in leaning back against the cold wall. Government officers bring him his food, and hot tea; but on no consideration may he leave his cell from the beginning

of each examination to its close. Happily the examination is in three distinct parts, each of which lasts two whole days. From first to last it is all a tremendous effort of memory; each student, as he enters his cell, being searched to make sure that he has not concealed any scrap of paper on which he might have jotted helpful notes, or, worse than all, a miniature edition of any part of the Classics. Each man may bring his own indian ink and brushes, but he may bring no paper. To prevent all possibility of fraud, he must at the last moment, and at an exorbitant price, purchase paper which has been stamped with the official seal. Provided with this he enters the cell, and then only is the subject of examination announced. These subjects are all themes from the fossilised Confucian Classics, or Essays on the History of China, its laws, its rites and ceremonies. At one of the examinations each man is required to write a poem of twelve lines. Happily for the examiners the length of the essays is limited—720 characters being the maximum, and 360 the minimum; necessary corrections being provided for, in the allowance of one hundred characters, which may be marked on the margin.

The greatest stress is laid upon excellent handwriting; and as a highly educated Chinaman is expected to be familiar with *six different styles of writing*, he has a somewhat perplexing choice. He may adopt the ancient stiff characters, or the ordinary freehand characters used in business, or those which are preferred for general correspondence, or the regular character used in printing. The literary man, however, selects one known as *Kiai-Shoo*, which is considered the most elegant.

I scarcely know whom to pity most—the students, or the examiners who have to wade through such mountains of dry Confucian wisdom. On the whole, I think the examiners have the worst of it; for though a student is occasionally found dead in his cell, he has only one set of essays to produce, and he is always buoyed up by hope of success and ambitious dreams,—whereas the luckless examiners have to wade through and carefully weigh the merits of perhaps eight thousand of these dreary sets of papers, with no ambition to gratify, and the certainty of causing grievous disappointment to upwards of seven thousand nine hundred students, besides all their parents and relations and friends, a multitude of whom invariably take this opportunity for a visit to the city, and so combine a little pleasure with this literary interest. Not that this visit is always attended with much pleasure, as it is found that epidemics of small-pox in Peking generally occur in the examination year, which is attributed to the influx of at least 40,000 strangers.

To get through the papers they have to work for several days and nights almost without intermission. No wonder that many utterly break down in mind and body, and are rendered useless for life from divers affections of the brain thus produced. Several examiners of the very highest rank have at different times been brought to the Medical Mission for treatment, having been seized with paralysis in the course of the examinations, entirely in consequence of the prolonged strain, which left them utterly prostrate; and so their work has remained unfinished.

The same thing happens to many of the students, to whom, of course, this examination is only the con-

clusion of a long course of cramming, and that of the class which is said to be most physically exhausting—namely, an intense strain on the memory.

One would naturally suppose that no one who could avoid it would subject himself to such misery; but this extraordinary nation recognises no possibility of official promotion by any other channel than this—the only form of literary success—consequently many of the men who fail return undaunted to the charge, year after year, till either their efforts are crowned with success or they finally break down. Some, as I have said, literally die in harness, in which case a hole is broken in the outer wall of the enclosure, and the corpse is thrust out; for a stringent regulation prohibits opening the gate while the men are in their cells, and traditional custom must be maintained in the presence of death itself.

On the other hand, some men of indomitable resolution persevere in their pursuit of literary honour till they attain to extreme old age; and it is no uncommon thing to see venerable grey-bearded students of from seventy to eighty years of age taking their place in these dismal cells! Such perseverance is at least sure of honorary recognition by the Emperor, who bestows a special title on men who have vainly continued their literary efforts to the age of fourscore years. In the province of Shantung a great arch of very elaborately sculptured granite commemorates the literary triumph of a noted scholar, who, in his eighty-third year, took the very highest honours at the examination for the highest degree (the Han-Lin, or Doctor of Laws). The inscription on the arch records that the son of this learned father had three years pre-

viously attained to the self-same dignity.

Here, then, we see the system of Competitive Examinations carried out to the bitter end—a system which, for more than a thousand years, has been the sole passport to all official employment, and no amount of experience in damaged brains and mental collapse brings one iota of relief to these many thousand victims. With us such competitions and such educational high-pressure are comparatively a thing of yesterday, and yet we already know too much of the crying evil of over-taxed brains and prodigal waste of mental energy.

China has long anticipated the work of the School Board, and at six years of age boys of all ranks are supposed to attend school and prepare for their lifelong bondage to Confucius, by beginning their dreary struggle to master the characters which take the place of our alphabet, multiplied a thousand-fold. They are taught to write each character separately on squares of lacky red paper; and by slow degrees they learn to pronounce each, while the little fingers learn to fashion the elaborate crabbed strokes. Though these small students are just as merry and full of life as our own schoolboys, they seem to take very kindly to the studies which they see their elders value so highly. Nevertheless, the cane is a fully recognised institution in every school, and is applied unsparingly without respect of sex! As you pass outside of such a school (which is probably held within the precincts of some merchants' guild), you hear the hum of many voices, all repeating lessons aloud; and if you look in, you see a troop of quaint little shaven-headed chaps, with their long black plaits and blue clothes, sitting at

small ornamental tables, very different from our school-desks and benches, and suggesting a remarkable absence of the destructive element in these small Chinamen! Of course a conspicuous feature in the school is the shrine of the tablet bearing the name of Confucius, to which each scholar must do daily homage.

Very probably another noteworthy object may be the school-master's greatest treasure — his handsome coffin, the possession of which is so great a solace to his mind. He himself is probably one of the men who has passed in the lower examinations, but has failed in the higher ones. Each small boy in turn stands before him to repeat his allotted task of diluted classics (turning his back so as to avoid the possibility of peeping); and thenceforth, until his life's end, his dreams of ambition all flow in one channel — classics — classics — classics! In a Chinaman's Catechism there could be but one answer to the question, "What is the chief end of man?" The only possible reply would be, "To attain a perfect knowledge of Confucian Classics."

The whole race are so entirely convinced that the highest pinnacle of perfection was attained by Confucius six hundred years before the Christian era, that from that time to the present, every Chinaman has striven only to cherish that light of the past, but the idea of originating anything new is deemed worse than useless — it is sacrilegious!

So when small boys have mastered the requisite "Thousand Character Classic," and the "Book of Odes," and other petrifications, they are handed over to more advanced tutors, and attend courses of university lectures on the works of Mencius and other ancient Confucian sages; and in due course of

time they are expected to pass in two local examinations.

Having succeeded in these, their names are then enrolled for a third — namely, the first of the great national examinations. These are held, twice in three years, at every prefectural city, and the degree which is conferred is called *Sew-tsae*, "adorned talent," and answers to that of B.A. at Oxford or Cambridge. Before being allowed to enter his name on the list, each candidate must produce a certificate to prove that he is a free-born subject of the realm, and of respectable parentage, — a limit which arbitrarily excludes not only the whole boating population, but also the children of the police, and all play-actors and slaves.

To obtain this first degree is an honour immensely coveted, even by men who do not aspire to further literary honours. In the first place, from the moment a man becomes a *Sew-tsae* he is exempt from corporal punishment, which in China is no small advantage. Moreover, he can command the attention of any magistrate; and, in short, has an assured social position. So every one who possibly can do so, goes up for this examination; and although it is known that only sixty candidates can pass at a time, as many as six thousand names are sometimes entered for one province.

This great multitude is, however, thinned by a preliminary examination, which occupies the first day. Three days are devoted to considering the six thousand papers, and only the men whose essays are approved are allowed to compete at the further examinations, which are then held at the prefect's official residence.

Just conceive what an impression of learning and exaggerated intellect must be produced by the

appearance of such an assemblage with closely shaven foreheads extending over half the skull! The majority of these faces are intellectual; many have delicate features; all are pale, beardless, and hairless. A very large proportion have strained their eyes with over-study of crabbed Chinese characters, so they wear enormous spectacles, with very broad rims of tortoise-shell, which add greatly to their appearance of wisdom.

We associate bald heads with old age, but this vast multitude ranges from eighteen to eighty years!

Each successive examination thins the list of competitors, till at length there remain only about a hundred for the final effort.

The moment that the printed list of successful candidates is published, hawkers start in every direction with printed lists for sale; and swift, lightly built boats, each manned by half-a-dozen strong rowers, start off at full speed, along every river and creek in the neighbourhood, to convey the news to anxious relations and fellow-citizens.

Here carrier-pigeons take the place of telegraphs; and many of the students make their agreement long beforehand with the owners of the birds, so as to ensure their being trained at the right places, and brought thence in baskets by special messengers. The Chinese are very kind to all birds, and these pigeons receive the greatest care, and are trained as special pets. On the publication of the fortunate names, the lists are at once forwarded to these men, who inscribe the messages on slips of thin stiff paper, these they attach to the legs of the pigeons, who straightway start on their homeward journey at the rate of about twenty-seven miles an hour, bearing the glad news to proud pa-

rents; and the towns which have given them birth rejoice exceedingly over the honour thus acquired.

So when the newly made graduate returns home he is received with considerable enthusiasm, and is borne along in triumph to worship at the ancestral hall, and gladden his ancestors with the information of his success. But ere they return to their homes, the happy sixty, or ninety as the case may be, assemble at the Court of the Literary Chancellor, there to be invested with the symbols of their new dignity—namely, an academic dress of bright blue, trimmed with black, a richly embroidered tippet, and a golden flower, to be worn on the extreme top of the hat, and which is the special Imperial gift. The Literary Chancellor invites them to dine at his own table.

Men who aspire to obtain official employment must now prepare for the next degree, which is that of *Keu-jin*, "elevated man," and answers to our M.A. This examination is held only once in three years in each provincial capital—in a great square enclosure like the one I have described. The examinations for this degree are more difficult than any of those which follow, involving a great strain on memory. There is, moreover, a terrible possibility, not only of failing to reap fresh honours, but of being actually deprived of those already earned; for in cases of serious failure, the *Sew-tsae* degree already conferred is sometimes cancelled.

A whole month of dire anxiety must elapse ere the publication of the list, which is awaited with feverish anxiety, not only by the relations of the competitors, but by all classes. The badge of honour now conferred is a more gorgeous tippet, and a more beautiful golden

flower; and the fortunate possessor of these is feasted and congratulated by all the authorities. When he returns home the magistrates go forth in state to welcome him; presents (including sums of money) are showered on him; rolls of perfumed paper are sent with a request that he will thereon inscribe a few words and his honourable autograph (in return for which further gifts are bestowed upon him). A name so creditable is inscribed on an ornamental board, and with much ceremony is hung up in the ancestral hall; moreover, his parents receive public thanks from the civic authorities for having given birth to so talented a son.

Many are now content to rest on their oars, but those who seek further literary renown must come to Peking in the following year to be examined for the Tsing-tse, or "advanced scholar" degree. This is the examination held in the enclosure which we visited, and is conducted by the greatest scholars of the empire, including the Prime Minister and a prince of the Imperial race; otherwise it is much the same as the last. But the successful competitors are presented to the Emperor, and many honours are heaped upon them; and their names, inscribed on gilded tablets, are sent in chairs of state, together with many offerings, to the blissful parents.

The men themselves remain at Peking to compete for the highest possible literary degree—namely, that of Han-Lin, which is described as Literary Chancellor. It is held in the Imperial palace, in the hall where the Emperor himself is supposed to expound the Confucian Classics to his ministers! The Emperor presides on the present occasion, and the successful competitors are invited to dine with his

Imperial Majesty, than which no higher honour can be conferred by earth or heaven. Curiously enough each guest has a table to himself. From this happy company are selected all the highest officials of the empire, and also the examiners for all the provincial and minor examinations—truly a dreary life-work!

As we wandered round the dismal city of cells, the man in charge showed us one, just the same as all the others, which he told us had been occupied by the young Emperor taking his degree. As the names of the writers of the papers are carefully concealed, we wondered by what means the examiners are ensured against such a terrible accident as failing to perceive the excellence of the Imperial essay! And yet, the luckless examiner who is detected in showing favour to any man, or in receiving a bribe, is ignominiously put to death in the very undignified fashion formerly so common in Japan.

We ascended to the summit of the three-storeyed building in the centre, whence we had a fine view of the city, and my attention was arrested by some extraordinary-looking objects erected on the city wall. By the aid of my glasses I could discern dragons and hollow circles towering against the sky. These, I was informed, were the gigantic astronomical instruments of a great observatory, which was erected at the end of the seventeenth century by a party of very learned Jesuit Fathers, who were sent with a letter of special commendation from Louis XIV. of France, to instruct his Imperial Celestial brother, the Emperor Kang-hsi, in the sciences of mathematics and astronomy. This scientific embassy was received with all possible honour by the Son of Heaven, and the astronomi-

cal and astrological fraternity, by whose reading of the stars all matters of Chinese State or domestic life are regulated. Strange to say, the Emperor so entirely recognised the superiority of the Western scientific instruments, that he discarded those in use, and bade the foreigners construct new ones on their own system. So they combined scientific use with Chinese decoration; and beautifully cast bronze dragons support astrolabes, armillary spheres, trigonometers, quadrants, astronomical circles, and other instruments, all of bronze. Amongst other objects is a huge celestial globe, the bronze surface of which is encrusted with golden stars to mark the constellations. All these are raised on a stone platform higher than the wall, and enclosed by a strong iron railing.

Wishing for a nearer view, we made our way thither; but to our extreme disgust, on arriving at the gate by which we should have ascended on to the wall, we found it locked, and the man in charge dared not open it, having recently

received strict official orders to the contrary. There was no doubt that he was speaking the truth, as he thereby lost his "tip." It was the more aggravating, as this gate is generally open.

As we were turning away somewhat irritated, I discovered, in a shady, sheltered spot beneath some pretty trees, two exceedingly curious groups of gigantic, purely native instruments of bronze, far more ancient and more interesting than those of the Jesuits—probably those which were discarded in favour of theirs. These were most fascinating, and I quickly settled down to sketch a magnificent astrolabe, which is a cluster of numerous gigantic circles, forming a sort of hollow ball, resting on a central pillar, and supported at the four corners by dragons rampant—a most picturesque object. Of course a little crowd soon assembled, but they were most respectful and kindly, and greatly interested by some small sketches of Ning-po which I chanced to have with me; so our afternoon ended most pleasantly.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART VII.

CHAPTER XIV.—A HAPPY EXPLANATION.

MORAY had hoped against hope that light might break through the darkness; but as these first sad days went on, the clouds only thickened around him. Seldom had there been such a complete commercial disaster,—not even on that memorable Black Monday in the City, when the great “house at the corner” collapsed. For in this case most of the people concerned seemed to be not only hit hard, but actually knocked over. The great bulk of the shareholders were small folks—shopkeepers or farmers—who had confidently invested their savings in the bank shares. So the burden of the loss fell upon a mere handful of men, who were certainly believed to be extremely wealthy, but who nevertheless could hardly do more than meet their enormous engagements: while between the two were a few gentlemen like Moray, who were rich, though a long way from being millionaires. And these seemed to be condemned to the grinding suspense of not knowing for months, or possibly for years, whether they were doomed to be simply brought to the brink of destitution or actually smashed up, lock, stock, and barrel. That was the formula in which Moray, who was a born sportsman, summed up his melancholy prospects. And meantime the clouds were thickening as his daughter's future became more hopelessly obscure. He had gone to Glasgow and to Edinburgh, where he had met Leslie, and where they had repeatedly “interviewed” the official liquidators. These gentlemen were civil, and even courteously sympathetic, to the wealthy High-

land laird, as to the respected young Lothian landowner who accompanied him. But in the first place, their stock of sympathy was almost overdrawn by the victims who were filling the antechambers with their wails. And in the next place, as Leslie shrewdly suspected, they took a gratuitously gloomy view of the situation. It was their business and duty to be on the safe side, and to secure each available shilling for the liquidation. They had actually laid a temporary embargo on the business of a flourishing provincial bank, which had been let in for a few of their shares by way of security for a small advance. They estimated the contingencies of calls at an absolutely indefinite quantity. They shook their heads over the chances of available assets from directors who had compromised themselves by doubtful speculations, and who might possibly be held legally liable for all the debts of the bank. The sagacious manager had made a bolt of it before the warrants for his arrest were abroad; and although he had left the cash-books and the ledgers behind him, it was more than possible that he might have tampered with them and falsified the accounts. In short, they proved genuine Job's comforters; and poor Moray, who had been worried by anxieties and want of sleep, chameleon-like took his colour from their grim prognostications. Leslie, on the contrary, rising to the occasion, showed a practical sagacity which Jack Venables might have envied. He asked shrewd questions; he drew deductions from hesitating and prevaricating an-

swers: and he came to the conclusion that, so far as Moray was concerned, things in the end might turn out to be far less than hopeless.

Nevertheless, as the clouds kept thickening over his prospects, the sense of oppression weighing on Moray became wellnigh intolerable. He was a man whose spirits rose to danger, and who was never more cheerful or more buoyant than when playing some dangerous game. Except that he had been much in the habit of smiling in other circumstances, it might have been said of him, as of the Baron of Mortham, that

"Ill was the omen if he smiled,
For 'twas in peril stern and wild."

Many a time he had carried his life in his hand, feeling that it was on the point of slipping through his fingers. He had been afloat in Malay proas in cyclones, when the circling hurricane had rent the sails into tatters, and shivered the long tapering masts as they dragged at the groaning decks. He had crawled in the jungle-lair of the skulking tiger, looking out for the glimmer of the green eyes of the savage in act to spring. But hitherto he had always faced his dangers in the open, with the sense that the *dénouement* would be speedily decided. Now he felt as if he were battered down beneath the hatches, in a craft that was driving on to the coral-reefs of a lee shore. He might drift clear of the danger by a series of special providences, and escape somehow by the skin of his teeth. Or, on the other hand, he might be dragging inevitably towards the breakers, and he could not lift a finger to save himself. His impulse was to escape from the deadlock upon any terms, and to make another unhampered start in life, even al-

though he should start afresh under the load of years and disappointments.

There Leslie's calm good sense was invaluable, with the ascendancy he had gradually established over the older and more energetic man. After trying various arguments and failing with them, he fell back upon one he felt sure must be effective.

"If you were lonely and childless, my dear uncle, I should not venture to protest against any decision of yours, however much I might regret it. But you have Grace to consider as well as yourself, and surely you have no right to sacrifice her interests? That suspense must be intolerable to your energies, I can understand; but we cannot choose the form of our trials for ourselves: all we can do is to bear them with cool and calculating resolution. You are one of the bravest men I have ever met; and you know yourself what you would say of a precipitate surrender in battle, when the lives of those who were dearest to you depended on prolonging the struggle."

As he spoke Leslie watched his uncle anxiously, and he was less grieved than surprised when the other incontinently flared up. Fiery by temperament and irritable from his trials, Moray burst out so strongly and so fiercely that Leslie felt inclined to answer him in kind. He coloured all over, and as he compressed his lips he nearly bit them till the blood came. Never, perhaps, had his habitual self-restraint sent him through so severe an ordeal. Not even when he had saved Venables on the rocks above Loch Rosque had he resigned himself to a self-sacrifice so heroic. But when, after a few moments of silence, he returned the soft answer that turneth away wrath, he knew already that he had his

reward. Moray's nature was as generous as it was hot, and already he repented his hasty speech. So he fully appreciated the generosity of his nephew; and being the more eager to make reparation, was more absolutely swayed than he might otherwise have been.

"You are quite right," he went on; "you can judge of things more coolly than I can. And now show me that I have your forgiveness by telling me what you recommend."

"It seems to me," said Leslie, speaking modestly but firmly, "that the path of duty is plain. Considering the circumstances that have brought you to unmerited ruin, you may imagine what it costs me to say as much. You must and will meet your engagements, but you must resign yourself to wait and learn what they actually are. If I thought things desperate, I should advise differently. But I don't. From what those liquidators say, it is clear there are sundry chances in your favour. The manager may be colared, or may be pricked by his conscience—and something may come of that. Then there is that defaulting and absconding director, whose property must be liable to the uttermost farthing. He has been speculative, and has locked up money, but possibly he may not have been altogether foolish. He has been dabbling in Colorado gold and Idaho silver, and his hands may hold some trumps, as we know was the case with Jack Venables. In any case, your only course is to wait."

"I suppose you are right, Ralph," sighed Moray; "but what is to be done in the meantime? All my property may be attached by the creditors of the bank, and my conscience could never suffer me to live on other people. I should

never digest my meals, and each glass of wine would seem to choke me. Then the suspense with the inactivity would fret me to death, and each day as it dragged by would be slow torture."

To that Leslie could answer nothing honestly. Had he been in his uncle's place, he would have suffered in the same way.

Moray resumed: "Yet if I did go to work again, it would be a disheartening case of *non robis*. Is it not 'Eothen' who says that wounded spirits naturally tend to seek a sanctuary in the East? Well, I have more practical reasons for going thither, and back to the East I am determined to go. Yet it is hard to face the separation from Grace, when any good fortune that might be in reserve for me would not be for her."

"But you talk, sir," said Ralph, "as if you were ruined already. Yet we have just agreed that it is altogether uncertain, since otherwise you might promptly liquidate and go free."

"True. But were you in my place, you would be loath to draw another cheque on your bankers. It might touch my honour afterwards, putting slighter considerations out of the question; and you ought to know better than any man, how a *cas de conscience* has troubled me already."

"I know it; and you know how I felt and spoke when you confided your anxieties to me. Surely, for those very reasons, you may trust me now. Well, it seems to me, on my soul and conscience, that you are going too fast and much too far. Your future is dark, unquestionably; but I fancy it will be brighter than you believe. You must wait and see. Of course, in prudence as in honour, you are bound to restrict your expenditure; but there is no reason why

you should not live respectably and like a gentleman in the meantime, preparing your resources for possible calls. Remember Grace."

Moray was not unwilling to be persuaded. Ralph Leslie, who had sympathised formerly with his fine-spun scruples, had now become his conscience and almost his honour. And after all, Leslie might be right in believing that things were by no means so bad as they appeared.

So the next pressing business was to put everything on the most economical footing; and the arrangements, painful as they were, at all events occupied his mind, and were so far serviceable. There was no difficulty about getting rid of the house in London: on the whole, he preferred to let it furnished—although at one time he almost decided to sell, on the principle that some sudden turn in his affairs might make him regret his precipitancy. He was doomed to grope painfully in the dark. As a Celt he was somewhat inclined to superstition, and the darkness is favourable to superstitious fancies. After all, the house in town was a mere matter for the house-agent. But the question of Glenconan lay near to his heart, and the idea of having to part with it was dragging at his heart-strings. It was with extreme relief then, and no little joy and gratitude, that he received a couple of seasonable offers. Calverley Baker wrote a rather blunt business-like letter, though civilly worded, proposing to take the mansion and shootings for a term of three years, at a rent to be settled between his lawyers and those of Mr Moray. At the close of his tenancy, as he added politely, he hoped to hand the property back to the proprietor with as good a head of game as when he received it. By the very next post came a

communication from Winstanley, almost to the same effect, except that he spoke of renting Glenconan from year to year, that he might be ready to give it back to its master on the shortest notice. But Winstanley's letter was a model of delicacy and kindly feeling; and though Moray knew the diplomatic gifts of his friend, he could not help fancying that Julia had inspired it. When he took Grace into his confidence and showed her the letter, she quite agreed with him. She laid her finger unhesitatingly on certain passages, saying they had certainly been dictated or suggested by Julia. For, since she had heard of the love-passages between Miss Winstanley and Glenconan, her feelings towards that young lady had altogether changed, and she was eager to make atonement for having misunderstood her.

But that point being settled to their mutual satisfaction, Grace was greatly surprised to find that her father inclined to treat with Mr Baker.

"With Baker there can be no sort of obligation," he said. "He will have full value for his money, which he chiefly cares about, and it will be a mere matter of pounds, shillings, and pence."

"So it would, sir—and for that reason, surely you will give Mr Winstanley the preference. He wishes to be friendly—Julia desires it much more—and I am sure it would be a satisfaction to you to gratify both of them. And—and——"

"And I had better begin to practise humility, you would say, and learn to put my pride in my pocket. Well, my dear, I daresay you are right. It is a hard lesson to learn, but it cannot be learned too soon."

So it was settled, and settled

promptly. Moray was not a man to hang upon a decision of the kind; though characteristically he sent a letter to his agents, desiring them not to drive too hard a bargain in the circumstances. "I am bound," he said, "to do as well for my possible creditors as I should have done for myself, but assuredly I cannot be bound to do any better." And it was with strangely mingled feelings that he set his signature to the lease of his shootings. On the one hand, he went all the lighter that his mind was made up beyond present reconsideration; on the other hand, he had drained a bitter cup, and he felt as if his spirits were crushed by the dissipation of a life's day-dreams. He had realised the cherished hopes of his youth and middle age. He had come home while yet in the pride of strength and health, to settle down on his hereditary wastes, with superfluities in place of encumbrances. Above all, he had been reunited to the daughter who was so dear to him, and had looked to his wealth and estates descending to her children. Now he was on the eve of another, perhaps a lifelong separation, and to all intents and purposes Grace might be left a beggar. What was certain was, that with the least possible delay he must deliberately determine on his course of action. Resignation to the will of Providence was very well in its way. He had listened with apparent complacency, curbing his impatience, to the worthy minister of Glenconan's homilies on the subject; but new enterprises were the only tonic that could react on his energetic nature.

He had never much liked London, as we know, but never had he found it so hateful as when he went south in search of occupation. It recalled the visit of some thirty

years before, when he had started from London a boyish adventurer, before his first expedition to the East. He shrank sadly from the old associations, and yet he haunted the scenes that recalled them. There was the old Tavistock Hotel in Covent Garden, with the same smells of the decaying cabbages without, and the memories of the water-cresses and skim-milk on the breakfast-tables of the coffee-room within. There were the pit-doors of Drury Lane and of the Haymarket, where he used to laugh at the humours of Buckstone. How lightly he laughed at anything in those days! what an appetite he used to have for chops and oysters at the jovial suppers in the Halls of Harmony! Yet after all, on second thoughts, his appetite and digestion only a few weeks before had been almost as good as ever. His troubles were ageing him prematurely, yet he could not afford to be ill. He must summon all the powers of his will to his aid, and he would seek to summon them accordingly. Sometimes they would answer to the call, often they would positively refuse; and nothing wastes and wears the constitution more surely than the perpetual effort to subjugate the sentiments to the will.

He had made up his mind to go back to the East, and in his constant conversations with his daughter he had made no secret of his intentions. In the East he was sure of finding occupation, and, at all events, a competent income in the meantime. It was too late, as he told himself, to amass a second fortune; yet, after all, who could say? Not even with the advance of years, and under pressure of disappointments, does a Raleigh lightly renounce the golden dreams which cheered him along the path of his early adventures.

Moray's old mercantile acquaintances in the City showed themselves friendly enough: he was a man to whom they might make liberal offers of help, in the assurance that any offers would be charily accepted. And he had pretty nearly resolved as to how he was to begin again, and was thinking already of securing a cheap passage in a screw-liner for Singapore, and of seeing about his slender outfit.

In his talks with Grace he had made no secret of his intentions; and he was surprised, and somewhat hurt indeed, at her strange insensibility on the subject. Seeing that he had set his heart upon going, she seemed to take his going as a matter of course—which was all very well, and so far satisfactory. He would have been sorry that she should have broken her heart over the separation, but he looked for a display of much natural feeling. He looked in vain: there was nothing of the kind. Grace discussed his plans with a calmness which would have done credit to a stoic, but which sat indifferently on a generally impressionable young girl, who had always been the spoiled darling of a doting parent.

But there is often a silver lining to the blackest of clouds, and they may be bursting with unexpected blessings when we fancy them pregnant with trouble. Moray, for his own sake as well as for hers, tried hard to make apologies for Grace; nevertheless the stinging suspicion of her heartlessness and ingratitude was fretting his very soul. Had it not been for the peculiar circumstances of his case, which disposed him to see everything *en noir*, the loving and large-minded father could scarcely have been so perversely unjust: the whole tenor of his daughter's life and conduct should have pled for her. As it

was, he began to figure himself as a Lear, while his Cordelia was changing to a Regan or a Goneril. The tone of his mind was reflected in his manner; and Grace, to her grief and pain, became conscious of the cloud between them. When, one morning, in growing desperation, he determined to bring matters to a point: he had an interview with the head of a mercantile firm in Leadenhall Street, and then dropped in at the office of a steamship company in Billiter Square. Contemning alike cabs and omnibuses, he strode homewards to the west by the Thames Embankment, and turned up at the door of their lodgings in Ebury Street, Pimlico, pale, sad, but determined.

Grace, who was sitting down to a solitary luncheon, jumped up with delight.

"I had given you up, papa, and I am so happy to see you. Julia Winstanley has been here, and insists on driving me down to Richmond in the afternoon. You will come with us, will you not? Finette is longing for a run in the country;" and she patted the setter that lay stretched on the hearth-rug. "In the meantime sit down, and let me give you a slice of this cold mutton: there is nothing else, so you may as well be contented."

Moray sat down in silence, and left her to help him. His silence was almost as chilling as the kiss with which he had answered her effusive embrace. Never perhaps had a pair who loved each other so dearly felt so miserably ill at ease.

"You will come with us, father, will you not?" said Grace again; "though indeed I only accepted conditionally. But an hour or two in Richmond Park will do you as much good as Finette. You look as if you wanted a little change and the fresh air of the country," she added, anxiously.

"I shall soon have change enough, Grace," answered Moray, gravely. "I have booked a berth for Singapore in the *Fire King*, for the 14th of next month,—not much more than a fortnight hence, as you see, and my hands will be full enough in the meantime."

At which announcement Grace's heart jumped up to her throat, and she strove in vain to repress her emotion. She was seized with a trembling in every limb, till the fork in her hand clattered against her wine-glass. Her father watched her with mingled pain and curiosity. He set down her emotion to remorse and regret; and though the display of feeling came rather late, nevertheless his heart warmed to her. He was about going to tell her kindly not to vex herself, since she knew that the inevitable separation must come sooner or later, when she took the speech out of his mouth. She would have given the world to have spoken calmly and more promptly, since she wanted to appear to speak naturally.

"Taken *our* berths, papa, did you say? and without saying a word to me: surely that was somewhat precipitate. I must say, I thought you would have consulted me, and at least have given me a glimpse at my cabin beforehand."

If Grace's fork had clattered against the glasses, her father let his fall from his hand. A delightful light began to break out of the blackness, irradiating the past, the present, and the future. Then the misgivings that had haunted him must have been phantoms of his own conjuring; and Grace, in her affectionate innocence, had taken it for granted that she was to be the companion of his exile. Now, if the truth must be told, the artless Miss Grace was not half so innocent as she had wished to appear. She had determined from the first to

go with her father: she had felt persuaded that he would not have her company on any terms. On mature consideration, she had come to the conclusion that her best chance was to bide her time, and treat the arrangement as a matter of course. Absorbed in that idea, she had failed to realise how entirely her father had misunderstood her motives; and when of a sudden he sprang the mine upon her that morning, she had been agitated by the idea of the rôle she had to play, and the issues involved in her playing it successfully. That she had broken down in the circumstances was a matter of course, since rehearsals are indispensable to the most experienced actors: she knew she had failed ignominiously in carrying off the situation, and she sat before her father as a self-condemned impostor.

So it was; he saw through her transparent device—and in another moment he held her clasped in his arms, and was covering her face and hair with his kisses. He could not speak, for he was thoroughly ashamed of the confession he would have to make; and with one single exception he would have done anything to atone for his suspicions. Grace saw through him as he had seen through her, and yet she generously refrained from reproaching him. The generosity came all the more easily to her, that in his melting and penitent mood she was sure to mould him to her wishes. She would strike while the iron was hot, and have it over.

"Well, papa—of course we must give up the drive to Richmond. I shall send Julia a note of apology, and we shall go down to the office, or to the docks, if the *Fire King* happens to be lying there. You may have forgotten about my cabin," she added, with a smile, "and in that case the sooner we

see to it the better. Do you think I can arrange to take Finette into it with me? I am sure she would be miserable if she had her quarters in the steerage."

But Grace did not know her father quite so well as she fancied. He was overflowing with the dammed-back reserves of love, let loose in this sudden opening of the sluice-gates. He was melting with the tenderness that comes of remorse for cruelty gratuitously practised on a cherished object. His feelings were those of the mourner who has learned too late of injustice towards the darling of whom death has bereaved him; only happily now there was no "too late" in the matter, and he had opportunity, if it so pleased him, of making ample reparation. For that very reason Moray stood firm; and while his heart was of wax, his will was of iron.

"Say no more, Grace—say no more, my dearest girl: God knows, that with the best and fondest in-

tentions, you have only tortured me too terribly already. You know that I never go back from my word,"—he caught the hand she raised in deprecation, in both of his and covered it with kisses,—“you know I never go back from my word; and I say and swear that, things being as they are, nothing will tempt me to let you share my doubtful prospects. Besides,” he added, with a forced smile, addressing himself to her practical good sense,—“besides, you would not wish to hang upon my arms, when age is threatening to weaken them at any rate.”

If he had feared that Grace would press her plea, he must have been agreeably disappointed. It is possible that he might have felt aggrieved by her calm acquiescence, had he not been still smarting from the lesson against jumping to hasty conclusions. Be that as it may, she said nothing—though, like the famous parrot of the fable, she may have thought all the more.

CHAPTER XXVI.—VENABLES À LA RECOUSSE.

Although Moray and his daughter had been naturally leading a secluded life, it must not be supposed that they were left alone in London. Dull time of the year as it was—for it was yet early in drear November—people were already coming back to town. The Winstanleys were there—Winstanley as we know, always welcomed the earliest opportunity of getting back to his beloved clubs and City boards; so it was the more to his credit or to his daughter's that he had tied himself by a lease of Glenconan. Ralph Leslie was there, still busying himself when he could, over the affairs of the liquidation; occasionally taking flying trips to Glasgow, when, sorely against

his tastes, he would travel third class; and striving to distract himself from his various anxieties by hard work. He had to carry all the load of Moray's troubles, for he never forgot how they had been caused. And the future of his cousin lay near to his heart—and his own future as well; for was not the one inextricably bound up with the other? He used to say to himself that he was selfish, as very likely he was; but selfishness in certain circumstances may almost become a virtue, and at any rate must command the sympathies of humanity. Yet strange to say, with all that was weighing upon him, he found he had the power of turning to his literary

pursuits with such concentrated exaltation as he had never experienced before. He always turned with an effort, but the effort was almost invariably rewarded. He looked forward with mingled pleasure and dread to the later hours of the evening. He would dine very frugally in his rooms—a more economical and agreeable arrangement than taking his meal in the mixed society of his club. After dinner he would doze and dream, and trifle with some light book—anything his indolence suggested, to put off the evil hour of pulling himself together and summoning his fancies. But once seated at his table, with parenthetical stridings up and down the floor, the clouds would clear from his brain as scales seemed to be falling from his brightening eyes. He was transported into fair fields of the imagination, where he might have forgotten the hard prose of the present, had it not been for a perpetually uneasy feeling, that the bent bow must not be permitted to fly back under some dimly realised penalty. That the double strain was doing deadly harm there could be no doubt; the poetical inspirations, which acted like the oriental's *haschish*, transporting him into a dreamland which bordered on brain fever, was a blending of opiate and stimulant with subtle poison. All the same, a new poem was growing fast under his hand, more ambitious in its tone and its stately Spenserian measure than any he had yet attempted. Scheme it had none; it seemed to work out of itself, by suggestions independent of his thoughts and volitions. Scheme it had none; yet it seemed to be shaping itself in forms of grandeur and beauty that surprised and intoxicated him. He was by no means puffed up, and

he wrote in fear and trembling, dashing the lines down in haste, lest his fancies should suddenly fail him. His pen seemed the instrument of a mysterious power; he felt as one of the Hebrew prophets might have felt, soaring on the pinions of the spirit above the tabernacle of fleshly humanity. Yet as each prophetic utterance bore the stamp of the speaker's individuality, whether he came from the rugged water-courses of Gilead or the soft green meadows by the Jordan, so Leslie wove his own deep and sad recent experiences into the tissue of his web, and coloured the threads with the tints of his consuming passion. He drew fresh excitement and a broader range of versatility from what might be called his humble self-consciousness. His fear was that his pinions might fail him any day, and that in the midst of his adventurous flight he might come tumbling broken-backed to ground. Even then he comforted himself with the hope that his labours might not have been altogether wasted,—that he might leave a fragment to found a reputation, if Grace cared for that, like Coleridge's half-sung lay of "Christabel," or the strain of him

"Who left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold."

Meanwhile, night after night he worked late or less late, as it might be, for his inspiration would leave him with scarcely a second of warning. It was not its nature to flicker down like a dying candle; on the contrary, it was turned off of a sudden, like the jet of a gas-burner. Happily, though often his visions would revisit him in his bed, sometimes he slept the sleep of the dreamless. Nevertheless his strong constitu-

tion was being sapped: his sunken cheeks showed a hectic flush in place of the old rosy hues of health; and there was a feverish glitter in the eyes that had once been so calm and clear. He gave little thought to his own health: had he cared more, he might have consoled himself, had he known all. We know that pity is akin to love; but when love and pity are close allies as well as kinsfolk, the one fans the flame of the other. The sight of Leslie, whom she saw constantly, went as constantly to the innermost recesses of Grace's heart. Her great compassion grew, as she began to be greatly alarmed; and had he thought the time a fitting one to question her as to her feelings, the answer would have been given in a form that must have surpassed his fondest hopes. Even with his diffidence, as he caught her eyes fixed on his, as he saw her turn her head aside to conceal the tears that filled them, he must have been more modest and much less observant than he was, had he not more than suspected the truth.

As for Jack Venables, who found himself not unfrequently in company of the lovers, he had not a doubt on the matter, and it confirmed him in his new and manly resolutions.

"What a fool I was nearly making of myself!" he said to himself; "and what is worse, I was within an ace of behaving like a villain. Well, one thing I will say—that girl is enough to make a fool or a scoundrel of anybody with more passion than principle. Upon my word, I would willingly look as ill as Ralph—and he does look ill, and I shall send him to see Cutler—I would almost look as ill as Ralph to be pitied as she pities him. But, unluckily, that's past praying for, and my appetite

is perfect, and I shall go and order dinner."

Which he did, and he did ample justice to the meal. But nevertheless, Jack's monologue was delivered rather ruefully; and as yet, he still felt more deeply than he would have been willing to allow. With the tempting prize he had stretched his hand for hanging immediately but impossibly beyond his reach, it was not in his nature that his heart-wounds should heal all at once. But all the same, as he knew, they were scarring over, and he was content to wait for the cure which he began to hope might be expected.

For Mr Venables had likewise come up to town; and having unconscionably extended a long leave, was again engrossed in his arduous secretarial duties. He could do nothing for his uncle now, except cheer and sympathise with him; so, of course, he busied himself in his own affairs—social, political, and commercial—for, like Leslie, Jack felt in need of distraction. To do him bare justice, he was deeply grieved that Glenconan would accept nothing in the way of pecuniary help—that he would even give no promise as to the future, except that he would sooner address himself to Jack than to anybody. When he added, however, by way of after-thought, "unless, perhaps, Ralph Leslie," he was so struck by the look of annoyance on his favourite's face, that, suspecting that poor Jack was now altogether out of the running, he laid a hand on his arm, and said kindly—

"Perhaps, to tell the truth, I *would* rather come to you first; for, though Ralph is the kindest and most affectionate of nephews, I have always regarded you as a boy of my own."

Still he remained peremptory as ever on the main point, and the

very warmth of his expressions was cold comfort to Jack. How well we should have got on as father and son-in-law, he thought, and what a pleasant little family-party we might have made! Then he thought too, and with honest vexation, that, after all his fine promises and noble resolutions of self-sacrifice, he must seem something like a humbug to his cousin Grace. It was true that her father had proved obdurate beyond expectation: it was true, it was not his fault that she had not been able to show him how he could help them. Nevertheless, all the same, if he were not a humbug, he was in a somewhat ridiculous position—and to ridicule Jack was particularly sensitive.

Now it will be remembered that at the close of the happy explanation with her parent in the last chapter, Grace had remained silent and preoccupied. In fact her mind was full of a resolution she must lose no time in carrying out. Jack had been complaining that she had asked him to do nothing for her: he really seemed to bear her a grudge for breaking the terms of their compact. Well, he should no longer have even the semblance of a grievance, and she would tax his generosity to the uttermost. She knew it was a melancholy pleasure to him to see her, even in his character of rejected suitor: she half smiled, though there was moisture in her eyes as she thought so. Well, she was going to ask him to send her away from him; to use all his efforts and all his influence to procure her father some fixed appointment and a place of residence in the East. If that were assured him, it would cut the ground from under his feet, upon which he had chiefly objected to taking her along with him. Whether Jack could do it, she did

not know; but she had a woman's faith in his star and in his rising fortunes. That he would do his best, she did not doubt; for she had a woman's faith in the loyalty of the man who had honestly, though hopelessly, loved her.

Jack was seated in state in the offices of the President of the Council. Lord Wrekin was far away—belated over a course of the waters at Aix-les-Bains—and Jack had taken possession of the presence-chamber, and was filling his lordship's chair of state. In the dignity of that position, he held subversive and democratic views. He declared to himself that in an effete state of society, rank and age received undue recognition. Here was Lord Wrekin, who was a worse victim to the gout than his brother, promoted to his highly responsible post on the score of being a peer and a sexagenarian; while he, who was really discharging the duties of the office, was declared by a stupid prejudice to be ineligible for a position in which, as he flattered himself, he might have shone.

He was disturbed from an Al-naschar-like reverie—in which he was lightly leaping from office to office, in a rise to the upper ranks of the peerage—by the entrance of the messenger. Jack started and blushed, as if the man could have read his absurdities; and then his features assumed an expression of dignified austerity, which was equally absurd, and quite perceptible to the messenger. But the well-trained official repressed a grin, and announced deferentially, "A lady to see you, sir."

Now Jack, in the discharge of his delicate duties, had not only to answer a great variety of cream-laid and wire-woven notes with gorgeous blazons or eccentric monograms, but to receive a good

many "ladies of quality" who preferred to transact their little affairs in person. Some of these *grandes dames* were welcome enough; but there were one or two exceptionally assiduous in attendance, who had long ago become his *bêtes noires*, if we dare apply so rough an expression to the gentler sex. So Jack inquired, with real concern, whether Bateson chanced to know the lady.

"Never saw her before, Mr Venables," was the unhesitating reply; "but I think, sir," he added with overdone stolidity, "that perhaps you might not object to receive her."

A wink at all times was as good as a nod to Jack.

"It is really excessively inconvenient at this hour; but—well, I don't know. Bring the lady up, Bateson—beg her to walk up."

Up she walked accordingly; and had she been stepping on bare boards, the light tripping foot so familiar to Jack's ear would have fallen unfamiliarly, it was set down so deliberately. But the thick pile of the Turkey carpets deadened all sound; and when Bateson threw back the door a second time, the secretary was buried in the perusal of a voluminous state-paper. Almost before the door had gently closed again, a light silvery laugh disturbed the hypocrite. He sprang to his feet; he pitched the document behind him, where it fell into the fire and burned away unregarded. For in another moment Jack had caught his cousin in his arms, and pressed his lips upon her cheek before he consented to release her.

"Well, I declare, sir," she exclaimed, as she blushed, and laughed again, and arranged her bonnet—"well, I declare, sir, if I had doubted about my reception, your warmth of welcome ought to reassure me. And I, who had always innocently imagined that the office of Lord

President of the Council embodied all that was most ceremonious and formal!"

"And so it does, Grace, in an ordinary way;" and he thought grimly of one or two of his most dreaded visitors. "But you see, we allow ourselves a considerable discretion; and so, in exceptional instances, we relax the rules."

"Then the sooner they are tightened again the better, I should say." And then, remembering the grave business on which she had come, the change on her own countenance was sudden enough in all conscience. Jack remarked it at once, and knew the business she had come upon as well as if she had already told him. He remembered, too, that the unseasonable freedom of his reception might leave her, upon second thoughts, ill at ease. She had come to her cousin unchaperoned, and he had treated her cavalierly, as he would never have behaved to her, unless under extreme provocation, in her own drawing-room. On the instant there was a corresponding change in him. All the kindness of his manner remained, but the fervour had died out of it; and no precisian of the straiter sect of the Puritans could have been more gently formal. If he had sinned, the best reparation he could make was to spare her all further embarrassments.

"And now, Grace, to tell me what you have come about, if you think it worth while. Or rather go straight to the point, and let me know what I can do to serve my uncle. If you knew how I had wearied and waited for this hour, you would not be surprised that my raptures betrayed me into extravagance."

Grace looked with her frank eyes into his, and blushing again, her looks more than thanked him.

She fancied they understood each other so well—and she was right—that she wasted not a single breath upon civilities, but went indeed very straight to the point. She told him how she was situated; she painted the terror and grief with which she regarded separation; and she wound up by saying—

“Should he go out as he proposes, on something like a wild-geese chase, he will leave me behind, and there is no help for it. His heart-strings are entwined so firmly with mine, that nothing I can urge will possibly move him; and though I know he will suffer as much as I, my tears will harden instead of melting him. Whereas, if I could manage what he believes to be impossible, and get him some reasonably good engagement, with fixed headquarters, he stands committed in honour as in tenderness, and can hardly possibly draw back. Oh, Jack!”

Jack sat in silence looking down, and drumming on the table with his fingers. Grace had a horrible sinking of the heart. Was she to be disappointed, after all, in her volatile cousin? and had she been trusting to a bending reed? But the doubt was only momentary, and her cousin glanced up with a face that was at once reassuring and resolute. She had never seen him look so much of the man; indeed, as he rose to his feet, with his strong figure and smiling face, and seeming to hold her destiny in his hands, he appeared to her overstrained nerves very much of the demigod. He took a turn or two along the great rug without speaking, and when he did speak, it seemed as if he were weighing

each word, very contrary to his usual custom.

“You have given me the opportunity I prayed for, Grace; now it is for me to avail myself of it. I would not raise false hopes for the world, for I would guard against adding to your anxieties by disappointment. But I solemnly swear by what I hold most sacred—and that is my brotherly love for you—that I shall spare neither effort, influence, nor self-esteem in trying to help you to the object you desire. I shall push requests as I should never push them for myself; and you know,” he added, with a smile, “that I have a very sufficient stock of impudence. As for the rest, it is in the hands of Providence; but I have a strong idea that Providence will smile upon us. And who knows, but that if Providence should interest itself in us, I may have the opportunity of killing two birds with one stone, and paying off an instalment of my debt to Ralph? If he saw that it was all comparatively smooth sailing with Glenconan, I see no reason why you and Ralph should not marry. Do you?”

“Oh, dear Jack, how very good you are! But—but—he has never asked me.”

“Well, he will then—you may take my word for that—and perhaps before many days are over. And now I must send you summarily away, for I have many things to turn over in my mind, much to the injury of her Majesty's service. Besides, there is Mr Bateson's knock at the door; if Bateson interrupts a business interview of this sort, you may be very sure that the summons is urgent.”

CHAPTER XXVII.—THE SUMATRA COLONISATION COMPANY.

All Jack's best feelings were awakened, and his pride was piqued besides. He warmed up very easily to the luxury of doing a kind action; and here was such a chance as he had scarcely hoped for, and would certainly never have again. To know that he had been able to befriend Grace and her father, would be a constant source of happiness for years to come; nor was he sorry to have the opportunity of so far clearing scores with Ralph Leslie. Moreover, it was much to him to play the patron to such a man as Moray—the *deus ex machina* to such a girl as Grace. If he did not rise to the opportunity, it should not be his fault; and the immediate question was how to set about it.

Never, when he had been planning and scheming for himself, had his quick and busy brain been so active as when he strolled meditatively out of Whitehall through the Horse Guards and made his way across St James's Park. He chose to dine by himself in a quiet corner of the coffee-room of the Blue Posts, that his meditations might not be interrupted by club gossip; and when he dropped late in the evening into the smoking-room at the Junior Carlton, of which establishment he had lately become a member, his plan of operations was pretty well arranged. What with his sanguine spirits and a pint of the old port of "the Posts," he began already to feel tolerably confident; though his hopes were vague enough, and he looked forward to rebuffs, and even to mortifications. But what of that? *Qui veut la fin, veut les moyens.* He was not asking for himself, and he would resign him-

self to put up with unpleasantness.

But man proposes and the higher powers overrule. Jack attained his object with the minimum of effort—in fact, by an almost incredible stroke of good-fortune, though he plumed himself, with some reason, on a bit of diplomacy which might have touched more scrupulous consciences.

There were sundry smokers scattered about the smoking-room, singly or in groups; and the eyes of the new-comer rested at once on a consequential individual seated by himself. No less a man than Sir Stamford Scrapper, chairman of three great companies, and director of three times as many more. Jack knew Sir Stamford pretty well—had met him repeatedly at Winstanley's table or elsewhere, and disliked him. On this occasion, in answer to a rather condescending nod and sign, our friend strolled up to him. Nay, when Sir Stamford favoured him with four stiff fingers, he pressed them with cordiality. It was much for Sir Stamford to give as many as four fingers to any man under the rank of a wealthy peer or a Governor of the Bank of England—more especially to one so young as our friend; but Jack, in other circumstances, would have resented not having the thumb as well.

"Glad to see you, Venables," said the great man, very affably; and as he made room on the couch beside him, Jack accepted the proffered seat, and rang for coffee and cigarettes.

"And how has the world been using you, Venables?" the other went on, with the undertone of

patronage that was so intensely irritating.

"Fairly enough, as times go," answered Jack lightly, swallowing down his rising annoyance as a morsel of the humble-pie he had made up his mind for. He meant to turn the conversation towards business matters; for one of his companion's great companies had its operations in the far East—and here was the very opening he wanted.

"Fairly enough," and though it suited him to keep his temper and be civil, as it would not at all serve his purpose to be crowed over, he began slightly to swagger, and to be more confidential than he would otherwise have been. He had to remind the big speculator that he was something more than Winstanley's right-hand man; that he might be considered a rising power in the City circles himself, having done remarkably well in a wonderfully short time.

"Ay, one other bit of luck I have had, by the way," he added, by way of postscript to a rather romantic story of successful enterprise, and as if this unconsidered trifle had almost escaped his recollection. "One other bit of luck I have had, and all the pleasanter that it came of a hit among the Yankees."

And then he gave a sketch of the affairs of the silver-mine which made Sir Stamford open the eyes of envy and admiration, and regard his young acquaintance with greater consideration than before. He was one of those men who identify good luck with great practical talents—a mistake into which neither Winstanley nor Mr Venables was at all likely to fall. Sir Stamford had been dining alone, too, or at least in company of a bottle of the club's best Burgundy; and altogether he was more inclined to talk than

usual. To do him justice, he had much too high an opinion of himself to hesitate to mention any mistakes he might have made or any misfortunes he might have met with. But he thought it might be useful if this clever and pushing young man would play jackal to his lion in *moments perdus*.

"Oh yes! there will be ups and downs in speculation. Hitherto you seem to have had all the ups; the more reason for your looking out for some of the downs. And I don't mind owning that I have had a sharpish experience of them of late, though I may boast that I have done better than most people. You know the story of those electric-lighting companies?"

For Sir Stamford had notoriously bought a variety of patents cheap; and having transferred his concessions to sundry companies (limited), had made great profits by the original transactions. How far he had subsequently burned his fingers with the shareholders, when premiums had vanished away like smoke, and shares fallen like mercury in the frosts of December, was a question that had been much discussed in the City articles.

"As well as any outsider can. But between you and me, Sir Stamford, you must permit me to doubt whether so shrewd a financier as you has not succeeded in keeping on the weather-gage. Let the storms blow as they will, some folks have the knack of floating ashore, and saving the bulk of their little property besides."

Sir Stamford, as Jack had surmised, felt flattered rather than annoyed. To any man of sensitive honour, the questionable compliment would have been a gross insult; but promoters and professional financiers have codes of morality of their own.

"Well, Mr Venables, between

you and me, as you say, perhaps I have not done so very badly. All the same, I have made far less than I had reason to expect; and so far the electric mania has been disappointing. It is all a question of time, of course; but I have no fancy for the philanthropy that is to serve posterity. And I really thought only a year ago that we had cut the gas-pipes and turned off the gas."

"Everything comes to him who waits," remarked Jack, sententiously. "You remember the favourite saying of the late French Emperor. And you are as likely to live for another quarter of a century as any man I know."

It was another stroke of dexterous flattery. Sir Stamford, who was of a somewhat sanguine complexion, and apoplectic, dreaded death as much as any man who has consecrated himself to the exclusive worship of Mammon. He liked Mr Venables more and more; he marvelled that he had been so long blind to his best qualities.

"That threadbare bit of comfort might be all very well, if we could all hope to live to the age of Methuselah. But in the meanwhile things will keep going wrong, and somehow it may take a deuce of a time to bring them round again. You know something of the half-yearly reports of joint-stock companies in difficulties?"

"As I trust none of yours are. I am not talking, of course, of the Electrical Illumination, which certainly seems to be pretty well quenched for the present."

"Well, no; not exactly in difficulties. But somehow a man like me, who has interests all over the world, must live in perpetual fear and trembling when he is out of the swing of good luck. If he open an evening paper, there may be a snake in the pages to sting

him." And Sir Stamford crumpled up viciously a copy of the 'St James's Gazette' which lay on the table beside his coffee-cup.

"No bad news in the 'St James's', is there?" asked Jack, indifferently.

"Not precisely bad news; but still there is a worrying telegram. You know I am chairman of the Sumatra Colonisation Company?"

"Everybody who is anybody knows that."

"Well, the Sumatra has a magnificent field before it. With fair fortune and able management, it might follow in the footsteps of the old East India Company."

"I have always thought you never showed your penetration more conspicuously than when you accepted the direction of that magnificent enterprise. You may annex an archipelago of spice-bearing islands to the Imperial Crown of England. You may crush the Dutch—a slow-going race of dam-diggers—out of competition with us. You may not only enrich yourself, your friends, and your shareholders beyond the dreams of avarice, but you may be handed down to history through all generations as the Hastings of some future Macaulay."

Jack pulled himself up in the flood-tide of his eloquence, because he feared he might be fooling Sir Stamford beyond the top of his bent. He need have entertained no apprehensions of the kind. Sir Stamford knew little of Lord Macaulay, and less of Warren Hastings; but he believed that Jack meant to be complimentary, and no amount of incense could sicken him.

"Yes, yes; I know, I know. And you may be sure I had thought of all that. And, on my soul and conscience, the dividends may be stupendous; for the scheme

is a sound one as ever was devised. The last reports were as promising as could be imagined; and I was actually counting my chickens as I walked up to this club."

"And what may have happened to interfere with the hatching?"

"Nothing very serious, to be sure; but all is thrown back into uncertainty. In a colonisation scheme like ours, everything depends on the man to whom we must confide its local working. There is no telegraph beyond Penang; so our Resident, *factotum*, or plenipotentiary is practically master of the situation. I had found an excellent man—Chamberlain, an old Indian political agent and a dashing cavalry officer. He knew all about the administration of native territory; he could have drilled semi-savage levies, and commanded them. He was honest as the day besides, and yet biddable; and I thought I had seldom made a happier hit."

"And now?"

"And now, after really a comfortable little dinner, when I settle myself to sipping the last glass of the Chamberlain, I call for the evening paper by way of digestive. I knew I should see a rise in Mexican Preferences, and so I did—when, turning over the page, there is a telegram from Penang. Chamberlain has slipped through our hands, and gone and died of jungle fever."

"Hard lines upon you, and not over-pleasant for Colonel Chamberlain!" Jack spoke carelessly, that he might collect his thoughts. The ball had been actually tossed into his hands; now his business was to play it back to the best advantage.

"It's bad for Chamberlain, no doubt—or for his widow," said Sir Stamford, peevishly; "but why did he assure us that his constitution was fever-proof? I remember

his very words, and I must say he has behaved badly. Only see the position he has left us in. It's not easy putting one's hand on the right man at a day's notice. Should we find him, he will have ever so many preparations to make before he sails. And every day is of vital consequence, for we have not a head that is worth counting in the Settlement."

Sir Stamford looked to Jack for some answer; but Jack sat silent, and in deep abstraction. His cigarette had burned almost down to his lips; but even that failed to rouse him from his profound reflection. Sir Stamford watched him curiously; then grew impatient; and finally ejaculated an impetuous "Well?"

Then Jack started out of his dream, with an admirably feigned blending of confusion and apology.

"Forgive me, Sir Stamford; but to tell the truth, I was thinking over a wild idea that flashed across me. There are strange coincidences in this sublunary world, and our meeting to-night may have been anything rather than fortuitous. Who knows? The fate of ever so many people may depend on it."

Sir Stamford cared little for the mob of people, but he was deeply concerned in the fate of one promoter. He was really interested: he hung upon Jack's lips, which were not particularly quick to open. When Jack did open them, if his speech was not of gold, it fell like a tolerable imitation of that precious metal.

"As it happens, I believe I know the very man you want. The worst is, that there is literally no hope of engaging him."

"Who in the world do you mean?—not Hobbler? I had thought of him; but he is booked already for the Government of Northern Australia."

"Hobbler! pooh! pooh! Forgive me, Sir Stamford, but I am surprised. Hobbler, as no one knows better than you, is a simple martinet among upper clerks—a mere man of routine—only fitted to go in leading-strings, and then likely enough to come to grief. No, I was thinking of a very different individual; but then, like Hobbler, he is booked already."

"Let me hear his name at any rate?"

"I mean David Moray of Glenconan, a great landed proprietor in the north of Scotland, who made a large fortune, besides, in mercantile pursuits in China."

"I know him," answered Sir Stamford, and his face fell. "I have met him at Winstanley's, and I did not think much of him. To be sure, he did understand something about the East, for I remember his waking up on a discussion about Chinese tariffs. But he had little to say about anything else, and I heard he had come to utter grief in that Scottish bank business. He is a connection of yours, by the way," added Sir Stamford, suspiciously.

"He is a connection of mine—a near connection, and a great friend; and that perhaps is your only chance of securing his invaluable services. Don't imagine for a moment that I am pressing them on you. Should anything of the kind come round to Moray, he would send both you and me to the mischief. He is the most independent-minded man I ever met, and the shrewdest; with extraordinary fertility of resource, and exceptional decision of character."

"Yet he has been fool enough to lose his fortune in that ridiculous bank."

"To compromise it, and without the slightest indiscretion on his own part." Jack explained all

the circumstances. "And now he has laid new plans, and set his face as a flint to carry them out: if we can induce him to alter them in any way, it can only be by working on him through his daughter."

And Jack explained again, with certain amplifications and reservations. "I bet ten to one you don't enlist him," he went on; "so I may tell you what I know him to be, without the slightest false delicacy. In the first place, he is a man of the nicest honour, whose word would be better than his bond to his employers. At this moment he has resigned the fruits of a life's labour rather than owe a shilling beyond what he can pay. Quixotic, between you and me. But what will you have? No man is absolutely perfect, and perfect honesty should be a useful quality in your factotum. But honourable as he is, he is a shrewd man of the world, and has been gathering experience all his days in an unruffled course of successful adventures. He used to be hand in glove with every prince and potentate between the Chinese ports and the Straits Settlements. His fame would go before him to Sumatra, if it has not been published there long ago. He is the very man to turn your resources to account,—copper, gold, and diamonds—coal, cotton, nutmegs, cinnamon, and all the rest of it. He could make the coolies and the working folks love him like their father; he would put down disturbances with the strong hand; he would deal summarily with the Dutch pretensions they have no power to enforce. But what am I dreaming of, and why should I tantalise you? Moray has booked a passage for Singapore in the *Fire King*, and he is not a man to go back from his plans. A pity, isn't

it! But it cannot be helped. But God bless me, Sir Stamford, I must bid you good night! Your agreeable conversation has carried me on to 11.30, and I have an appointment in Lombard Street to-morrow before I turn up in Whitehall."

"A moment, Venables—just a moment. Really I have had no time to think. And you say there is no hope of treating with Mr Moray?"

"None whatever, so do not bother about it. I am really sorry I said anything on the subject. Unless, indeed," said Jack, coming back to his companion, whose slow meditations were outstripped by his volubility—"unless, indeed, as I said before, anything were to be done through his daughter; and that seems like seething the kid in its mother's milk—seducing Moray through the domestic affections. Well, good night."

"What a hurry you are in! Sit down for a moment. You are talking nonsense when you speak of seducing him through the affections. If we chose to engage him, we should make it worth his while—worth any man's while,—that I can tell you."

"Make it worth his while!" repeated Jack slowly, subsiding into his seat again. "Make it worth his while! Well, as we are upon the subject, you may give me a notion, once for all, of the terms the Company would be willing to offer. They would not sway Moray from a settled resolution by a hair's-breadth; but they might possibly be used as arguments by his daughter—and, believe me, that Miss Moray will be our best advocate." Unobserved by Sir Stamford, it will be seen that Jack had assumed a tacit solidarity of common interest.

On that hint and in his excite-

ment Sir Stamford spoke, naming terms which would have made Jack open his eyes had he not by an effort half closed them languidly.

"That might do," he observed, sleepily.

"Do! I should think so, indeed," growled Sir Stamford.

"Yes; that might possibly do. But there would be another point, and of more importance than mere pecuniary considerations."

"And what may that be?"

"Moray would insist upon having his hands unfettered, to act as agent and Resident under unlimited responsibility, for which he must, of course, be ready to answer. I need hardly say, that at that distance from headquarters, the stipulation will be entirely in your own interest. But as you and I know Moray better than the Board of Directors—as, in fact, he would be nominated through your influence, as your own man—it must be understood that he may count upon you for arranging that."

"Can you put off your engagement in the City to-morrow morning?" demanded Sir Stamford, abruptly.

"It would be awkward and most inconvenient; but I daresay I could manage it—that is to say, if I thought it would help you over your difficulty."

"Come to my house, then, at ten o'clock, and I will give you a more decided answer, so far as a single member of the Board may speak. It would be altogether opposed to my way of doing business to settle matters of such importance in a club smoking-room, close upon the stroke of twelve."

"Hooked, by Jove!" ejaculated Jack, in an outburst of self-complacency and gratitude, as, taking leave of the City magnate on the

club steps, he saw him safely ensconced in his brougham. "I don't think he is likely to break away—but there is no knowing; and I wish the morning's inter-

view were well over. What fools some sharp fellows are, to be sure! though he may thank his stars if he gets Glenconan for his president."

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE COMPANY'S NEW RESIDENT.

Little did Moray think, as he went down the steps at the Fenchurch Street Station one dreary day in November to take a train to the docks to revisit the Fire King, with feelings strongly in sympathy with that most dismal of metropolitan stations—little did he think that at the very moment he was the subject of an animated discussion at the Board of the Sumatra Colonisation Company. So it was, however: Sir Stamford had "taken him up"; and Sir Stamford invariably managed to have his way with his fellow-directors. After what we have seen of him, it need not be said that he was far from an able man; but he made none the worse chairman on that account, as chairmen go. He had the knack of using other men's brains; and now he was driving home all the arguments with which Jack had primed him two evenings before and in their subsequent interviews. Indeed he would have produced Mr Venables in court, had he not feared to betray himself as the mouthpiece of a mere boy. Jack would have been immensely flattered to hear how the chairman echoed and re-echoed him. Of course Sir Stamford had been brought to believe in his new *protégé*, and was persuaded that in sending Moray on this mission he was doing his best for Sir Stamford Scrapper and his shareholders.

"A man of iron, gentlemen—a constitution case-hardened by long exposure in the East—an unrivalled knowledge of the oriental trade

—a personal acquaintance with half the potentates there. A born leader of other men—always predisposed to peace from his mercantile training, but ready to fight should fighting be indispensable—easy-natured, but with extraordinary determination of will—great readiness of resource—the hand of iron under the glove of silk—the sort of autocrat who will keep things straight with the European settlers, and will be worshipped by the natives. Then he is a gentleman of family and powerful political connections—a circumstance which, I need not remind you, may save us, should there be difficulties raised at home as to our working the charter."

"You know him well, then?" asked one old gentleman, innocently. He was an ex-colonial governor, verging on dotage.

Sir Stamford coughed, but was equal to the occasion.

"Mr Moray has lived much abroad, Sir George. I cannot boast of so close a personal acquaintance as I should desire. But I appreciate his high character thoroughly, and am glad to say we have not a few intimate friends in common."

In short, as the upshot of the proceedings, the Board passed a unanimous resolution that it would be eminently desirable in the interests of the Company to engage the services of David Moray, Esquire of Glenconan, as their acting manager and Resident in the East. The Board further granted its

chairman discretionary powers to conduct the negotiations—appointing a special meeting for an early day to receive and confirm his report.

The first impulse of Jack Venables, when he had carried off a triumph so brilliant and unexpected, was to rush away to his cousin with the joyful news. On second thoughts, he resolved to restrain himself, and by a sublime effort of self-sacrifice decided to say nothing to her in the meantime. Sir Stamford's advances to her father would be more of an agreeable surprise; and it would be the better, for the scheme that lay so near to her heart, that she should be ignorant of the Company's proposals. She would know well enough and soon enough who had aided her so effectually; and alas! and after all, what did it matter?

Moray had come back from the Victoria Docks almost at the same hour as before; and the lunch had, if possible, been rather more melancholy than on the former occasion. The day of departure was drawing nigh; his determination was firm as ever; and Grace, to her sad disappointment, had heard not a word from Jack. "He may have been able to do nothing for us," she thought. "I hardly hoped that he could. But at all events, he might have sent a message to say he had not forgotten us,"—when a lumbering barouche drove up to the door, and a bulky footman descending from the box, performed a tremendous cacophony on the knocker, which was out of all proportion to the size of the house.

"Sir Stamford Scrapper!" ejaculated Moray, glancing at the card. "I know the man by name; he is on the direction of no end of companies. Made a fortune, they say, and perhaps lost it again, by elec-

tric lighting. What can he possibly want with me? Ask the gentleman to walk up-stairs."

Grace muttered something unintelligible, and clasped her hands nervously under the table. "A message from Jack," she thought to herself; and she was sensible of something like a cold perspiration. Whether she had suffered or been happy, she would have found it hard to tell, during the mortal hour and a quarter during which her father remained closeted with his visitor.

Yet the main points of the business between the gentlemen had been settled promptly enough. With all his "bumptiousness," which may be used for want of a better word, Sir Stamford was enough of a man of the world to be able to unite suavity to dignity when it suited him. He thought too well of himself to be a vulgar toady; but he could be winningly courteous to his superiors or to men whom he hoped to use. And Jack had sounded Glenconan's trumpet to such purpose, that Sir Stamford came prepared to soothe the chieftain's Highland pride. Nothing could be in better taste than his self-introduction: there was a happy mixture of respect with courtly friendliness.

"The object of my visit must be my apology for presenting myself uncereemoniously; though I need hardly say how gratified I feel at any opportunity which enables me to improve my acquaintance with Mr Moray. We have met at dinner more than once, as perhaps you may remember."

Moray, as it happened, did not remember; but he bowed, and begged his visitor to be seated. Thereupon Sir Stamford, full of his purpose, went straight to his point without circumlocution.

It would be little to say that

Moray was taken aback ; he was astounded. By this time he thought he had pretty nearly "dree'd his penance," as the Scotch say, for any indiscretions of his early youth. And in the thick darkness that had been gathering about him—in the dismal sense of approaching separation from all in the world he loved most dearly,—he had begun to doubt of a beneficent Providence. He had striven his best to acquiesce in its decrees : he had reminded himself that he was being purged of the faults he had lamented. All the same, he had been murmuring ; and for the life of him, he could not help it. The friends in whom he had trusted had failed him—they had given him little but fair words ; and he had taken his passage for the East in desperation and as a *pis aller*, with the prospect of groping in the decline of his life after the fortune he had followed in his youth so cheerily.

Now all seemed likely to change as by an enchanter's spell, and the recollection of his doubts and fears humiliated him. Faithless and unbelieving, the way had nevertheless been opened up ; and the worldly-minded and prosaic Sir Stamford was the messenger selected by Providence. Such a post as the smooth-spoken Baronet came to offer him was the very position he would have desired. It offered his ambition noble opportunities : it left his arms free ; he might do much to retrieve his fortunes and secure a competency for his beloved daughter ; he might do more in a few years as a benevolent despot in the Malay Archipelago, than he could accomplish as a private individual through a lifetime in East London. For the bank, devouring monster as it might be, could hardly swallow more than he at present pos-

sessed. Had Sir Stamford known all, he might have spared much of his breath ; he had caught his fish ere the net had well been cast.

But knowing nothing of what was passing in Moray's mind—and as the canny Scot, though perfectly civil, retained his mask and kept his own sage counsel—Sir Stamford was lavish of satisfactory pledges.

"I need not say," he went on, confidentially, "that I am aware we must pay for such a man as you. It would be the worst economy driving too close a bargain with any gentleman we send out on so important a mission. You must know something of the resources we hope to develop ; and if we are to achieve a great success, they ought to be developed speedily. In our territory of Sarimbang, which stretches along the sea-coast for fifty miles or more, and covers heaven only knows how many square leagues, the natural riches, I believe, are practically inestimable. We can grow anything from cotton and sugar to cloves, cinnamon, and nutmegs. The streams that may be applied to purposes of irrigation run sometimes over sands of gold, or more often through the deep alluvial deposits containing the germs of still greater natural riches." There Sir Stamford, in opening the flood-gates of his eloquence, was quoting from the Company's original prospectus—which, be it said by the way, was based on reports more reliable than is generally the case in similar productions.

As Moray listened with close attention, from time to time throwing in an observation or asking a question, the chairman came to believe in him more and more. He had evidently all the threads of oriental commerce at his finger-ends : he would know how to pull them in time and place. Thence

Sir Stamford passed on to the political situation. There were native chiefs to be conciliated or subsidised, as economically as possible. There were formidable neighbours, with hereditary piratical proclivities, who must either be kept at bay or crushed in case of need. There was the Dutch Government, which claimed a shadowy sovereignty over great part of the great island of Sumatra, even in districts whither it had never sent a soldier, and where it had never shown its tricolour. The Dutch had no well-founded pretension to any part of the lands embraced in the Company's concession. Nevertheless they might possibly give trouble, as there was little question they would desire to do.

On that dark and delicate political ground, Moray showed himself even more at home than in commercial matters.

"I ought to know the Malay nature," he said; "I have lived and fought and traded among Malays for a good part of my life."

Then he went on to talk of the intricacies of Straits politics, which would be useful precedents for conducting affairs in Sumatra. "For those Malay princes," he went on, "are pretty much the same all over the world. Fanatics in religion when it suits their purpose, though their creed sits lightly enough on their consciences; pirates ever willing to make prey of the weak, always ready to knock under to resolution and rifled guns; and ruling their subjects with such a rod of iron, that their subjects are always eager to slip their necks out of the collar. Nowhere is honesty a better policy with all classes, so long as honesty is backed up by pluck, and power, and unflinching will."

As he uttered that uncompromising maxim, his rugged features and honest grey eyes lighted up with

so stern a gleam of determination that Sir Stamford for the moment was afraid of him. Consequently he respected him more and more; though he felt like the lion-tamer who had got hold of a noble animal, that on the faintest provocation might turn again and rend him.

He by no means liked being overawed, and was not sorry to change the subject, now he was persuaded that the future of the Company was safe in the firm hands to which he was to confide it.

"Well, my dear sir, there will doubtless be details to be discussed with the directors. They will like to have their say on the subject, though we may consider everything practically settled. In fact they have given me *carte blanche* to treat, by a unanimous resolution of the Board. And I can hardly perhaps pay a higher tribute to your business qualities when I remind you, that though you have gained my entire confidence, not a word has passed between us as to pay and appointments."

Moray laughed.

"It is an oversight I should never have deemed I could be guilty of. It is not my habit—be assured of that. But *que voulez-vous*? For a year or two now, I have been out of the way of trading;" and headed, with a somewhat melancholy smile, "I was learning to comport myself as a gentleman of fortune. Moreover, I was persuaded by your talk from the first, that such a Company under a chairman of such intelligent views could not fail to be sufficiently liberal. And I am bound to add," he went on, in a burst of his natural frankness, "that the situation you offered suited my ideas so well, that the pay, important as it is, became somewhat of a secondary consideration."

Nothing could have shown the

progress that Moray had made in the dogmatic opinion of the self-important chairman, than the fact that this rash avowal did not affect him unfavourably. The day before, it would have been a good reason for lowering the terms; now, if anything, it tended to raise them. He had hit upon the shrewdest of men of the world, who would, notwithstanding, set the interests of the Company before his own. After all, a trifle of pay more or less meant nothing to the personal dividends of the chairman; while a man who could make the Company flourish was veritably a pearl of inestimable price.

"Well, the matter has been left in some measure in my hands, and perhaps you may have seen by this time that I am not one to haggle with such a man as you. What say you to a fixed allowance of £2500 per annum? There is a Government House, and a monthly allowance which you may fix yourself to cover the table—for you will be expected to entertain your subordinates, and give your secretary, &c., the run of your larder. Besides that, you have two per cent on the net profits of all exports from the Settlement. At the lowest figures of late years, it should come to nearly as much as your fixed salary; with management like yours it may be ever so much more. So give me your hand on it, and let us clench our bargain."

Moray gave his hand and gripped that of the other man with a fervour that touched him in more ways than one. He felt inclined to blow his smarting fingers; and at the same time, he liked the warmth of the grasp. It seemed to him as if this lion of the jungles was licking the liberal hand that fed him. A thought occurred to him on the spur of the moment.

"And now, my dear Mr Moray,

that we are friends for life, I hope, as well as political and commercial partners, may I beg a favour of you in the name of the Board? It strikes me that, in the interests of the shareholders and their shares, an appointment like this should be solemnised with some ceremony. Will you give us the pleasure of your company at a little banquet before you sail? Place, the Albion in Aldersgate Street; time, to be arranged in consultation with my colleagues."

Moray made a wry face; but it was no time to stand upon trifles. "Of course I shall come, and with great pleasure, Sir Stamford, since you ask me. But I must warn you that, like Moses, I am no orator; and that if you parade your lawgiver and leader in public, you will probably show him to disadvantage."

"Oh, I will be your Aaron, and say anything you may leave unsaid," returned Sir Stamford, with infinite readiness. "I don't want to flatter you; but simply showing the leading shareholders the new resident will send up the shares in anticipation of the future."

"Be it as you will," said Moray, smiling. "If you think showing your Sumatra shareholders a Highland deer-stalker will have such an effect, it would be childish indeed to refuse to parade myself. But by the way, Sir Stamford, and at the risk of falling further in your good opinion, there is another question I had forgotten. I have been so absorbed in the object of your visit, that I have never asked to what or to whom I am indebted for it."

"Oh, ah, very true," said Sir Stamford, stammering. To tell the truth, in his satisfaction at having made prize of Moray, he had forgotten Mr Venables, and was very willing to forget him.

"Ah, very true: well, the fact is, that I had long known Mr Moray most favourably by reputation. Mr Winstanley, and other men connected with the East, have often spoken of you. But I confess it was a chance, more than anything else, that put our present fortunate arrangement into my head. I chanced to meet a young friend of mine and a connection of yours at a club the other night— young Venables. We got talking about Sumatra and oriental trade, and somehow your name came up. The hint was enough for me, and on the hint I acted."

Moray saw it all, and his first impression was one of mortification. The world had indeed been turned topsy-turvy with him, since the day, not so very long ago, when he had been patronising an impetuous boy in the plenitude of his wealth and wisdom. Now the boy had "been" and helped him to such a position as he had hardly dared to covet. There was a passing impulse to throw

up the whole affair; but then he thought of Grace, and almost simultaneously of good Jack Venables. To dream of refusing his help in the circumstances—to reject his warm-hearted services on the score of his youth—could only be a temptation of the devil. What a pity it was that Grace could not love the boy, and lighten an almost intolerable load of obligation! Well, there was time to think about all that; and it reminded him that Grace must be on the tenter-hooks of expectation. Though they were living in very modest lodgings, it was only due to Sir Stamford, humbug as his last confession might make him appear, to introduce him formally to his daughter.

And Grace's gratitude and cordiality—for she had not, like her father, got a glimpse behind the scenes—confirmed the Baronet in his friendly feelings. He thought the better of himself, if possible, for being in a position to patronise these interesting *protégés*.

CHAPTER XXIX.—THE CUP AND THE LIP.

"Oh, Jack," was all Grace's greeting to her cousin when he made his appearance at the lodgings in Ebury Street, late in the afternoon, on the day of Sir Stamford's call. At first her heart was too full for words; but her looks were more eloquent than any speech could have been. She found her voice subsequently, and had enough to say; but that look and simple ejaculation were more than sufficient for Mr Venables. For once he stammered, and was almost as tongue-tied as she; for once he honestly tried to make little of his services, instead of magnifying them. It was waste of breath, and perhaps he was not

sorry. Grace would not have it: she would not hear of the arrangement being due to a happy accident; nor did he care to boast of the subtle diplomacy by which he had brought Sir Stamford to the point, by judiciously befooling him. Remembering what she had refused him, and how he had repaid her, she glorified his generosity more and more, as her emotions fairly got the mastery. She hardly knew what she said, yet her eyes said more than her lips. How far Leslie would have liked it, I cannot say. He would have been less than man had he not been jealous; and never had his lady-love looked more beautiful. For once he was

altogether out of her mind ; yet all the time her heart was true to him. Had Jack been given over to his old self-seeking—had he been so far left to himself, encouraged by her praises and her smiles, as to say a word of the old love, or to hint at the old suit,—he would have lost in one second all he had gained. It was his grand disinterestedness she exalted and adored ; and though she spoke of love, she only liked him.

Nor did Jack, who had been studying his cousin pretty closely of late, fail to comprehend her. All the same, he enjoyed those first-fruits of his kind action. He had made up his mind heroically to spare nothing in her service : it was no fault of his if success had come so easily, and it was only right that she should take the will for the deed. So, like a cat basking in the sun, and being delightfully stroked and tickled, he rolled himself over metaphorically, and abandoned himself to the caresses.

And as the French proverb says the appetite comes in eating, Jack enjoyed the luxury of doing good actions so much that he determined—again I follow the French—not to pull up in a path so seductive. Already an idea had flashed to his receptive brain, that he might handsomely complete his work by coming to an understanding with Ralph Leslie. As to that he said nothing to Grace. He had learned already that in that Machiavellian benevolence of his, silence and surprises were half the battle.

Leslie had already heard the good news from Moray. He would have been more than mortal had he not received them with mingled feelings. He heartily congratulated his uncle and his friend ; but he had a sickening sinking at

the heart when he thought of himself and his fortune. Moray seemed made independent of his sympathy and self-sacrifice—though of that, as he flattered himself, he felt unfeignedly glad. But on the other hand, although Moray had said nothing on the subject, he had a sad foreboding that Grace was to go from him ; and God only knew what might happen in her absence. He must leave everything to God ; but meantime he must be content to suffer. Then how he did envy Jack Venables ! He almost feared that he hated him. There are some men born to luck in this world ; while others are the hapless victims of their destiny. He would have sacrificed everything he possessed to help his uncle and Grace. In fact, he had given up all he possessed, and was wearing himself out in a garret—it really was a tolerably comfortable set of rooms—that he might get a living by literature and poetry, when the fortunate Mr Jack Venables swaggers in, and by the simple breath of his mouth changes everything as by enchantment. Truly the luck of some men was wonderful, and altogether out of proportion to their merits.

Thus ruminating, he heard a familiar knock ; and his impulse was to ring and bid the servant deny him. Second and better thoughts prevailed. "Let Jack come up and parade his good deeds ; it is only the foretaste of my future sufferings."

Jack did come up ; but he came in like a breath of June, rather than the rough March whirlwind Leslie had apprehended. His manner was almost deprecating ; he was evidently ill at ease.

"You have heard the news about Glenconan ?" he asked.

"I have ; our uncle has just

been with me. He well knew how deeply I was interested; and I need not say how glad I am."

But as he spoke, he felt he lied; and he knew well that his looks belied him. Jack smiled, and began to be more at his ease.

"You are glad of course, because you always think of others before yourself; but between ourselves, and in the frankness of friendship, it brings rather a heavy blow on you."

"It is a sad separation, and I am sorry to see them go; but in the circumstances, I can conceive of nothing better for him."

"No doubt. And this engagement of his will be a blessing to Grace; for she will insist on his taking her with him, and I am persuaded he will not refuse."

"So I supposed," exclaimed Leslie, almost savagely. He winced under Jack's remark, which he found equally true and ill-timed.

It was the show of irritation for which Jack had manoeuvred. He threw himself back in his chair, and looked full in his friend's face.

"My dear old fellow, let us have done once for all with this nonsense, which is unworthy of the like of us. Let us play our cards down on the table. I loved Grace dearly; I found she loved you passionately, and only liked me; I have given her up. I know in my conscience she has chosen wisely; I have never forgotten that day above Loch Rosque. You will have her for your wife and your life-companion, and an angel does not fall to the lot of every man. You surely do not grudge me the poor satisfaction of sparing her the separation from her father, and smoothing the way to her marriage."

"I never asked her for my wife," murmured Leslie.

"You have only to ask and to

have: 'tis I who tell you so; though it may be a work of supererogation confirming you in your convictions. Yes, you and Grace will be happy; and so shall I, in my own way and somewhat later."

Leslie, though wretched enough in the meantime, on his own account, felt a great pity for Jack at losing Grace, and, like Grace, was so deeply touched, that he felt it difficult to express himself. In his forgetfulness that circumstances had been fast moulding and purifying the other man, he reproached himself for having so much undervalued him.

"You make far too much of that little affair on Loch Rosque. I only did what any one else might have done; and now, at all events, you have wiped off the score, and left a heavy balance on the other side."

"Let that flea stick to the wall, as Donald Ross would say. I know all about that day, and so does Donald. But I had wellnigh forgotten what I have come specially to speak about. There is no time to be lost, as to making your arrangements for going out with the Morays."

"For going out with the Morays!" echoed Ralph. "What in the world do you mean, Jack?"

"What I say," answered Jack, sharply. "You have been our uncle's right-hand man all through this bank business. You are engaged, or as good as engaged, to his daughter. You have nothing I know of to keep you now in this country—all the liquidation business can be done by deputy or correspondence; so, if I were in your shoes, I should volunteer for Sumatra."

"And in what capacity, may I ask?" responded Leslie, half inquiringly, half incredulously.

"Why, as the new Resident's

secretary. The place, so far as I know, has not been yet filled up. It is quite indispensable that the president should have a secretary; and the Board, you may be certain, will not interfere with his choice."

Leslie sat silent and reflecting. The visions of bliss opened before him dazzled him: a long sea-voyage in the society of Grace; a family life under the roof with Grace and her father; the assurance that, should it please him to ask her hand, neither she nor yet her father would refuse it. And all this was planned for him by his generous rival, who could do more in his favour than any one else. He sat silent and reflecting still; but lest Jack should possibly deem him ungrateful, he reached out a hand.

Whereupon Jack warmed up, becoming at once practical and playful.

"Nothing in this world could have turned out more happily for you, my dear boy. The moment you get the appointment,—and that, as I need hardly repeat to you, is safe—for think what a blessing your collaboration will be to Glenconan,—the moment you get the appointment, your marriage is as good as arranged. It is all a question of delicacy and the opportune moment. Then your health comes in. You know what Cutler told you—that you were as strong as I, or Glenconan, or Donald Ross, but that change of scene and distraction from care were imperative. Well, by what we propose, your anxieties disappear; and as for change of scene, you will have enough of that in all conscience. I don't know how that poem of yours may have progressed. I am quite sure that if you stay on in town, it might be your elegy and inscribed on your

tombstone; but only think of the inspirations you may draw from moonlight and cool shadows under the noonday blaze in the spice-groves of the South and the tropical forests!"

Leslie smiled, and naturally yielded to the seductions.

"But you are aware how Moray's difficulties arose; and you know, too, that duty bids me see him through them."

"Perhaps; though that is a question for casuists. But how, may I ask, can you help him better, while his liquidation hangs on hand and drags on, than by accepting a certain income with free quarters, and leaving your leisure moments at liberty for literary pursuits? You have been living, as I know, parsimoniously on your rental. Now you may leave it to accumulate against contingencies." Besides, if you owe something to your notions of honour, you owe much more to Grace. How would she feel when her father's affairs are straightened out, as I have no doubt they will be, if you had made an unhappy despatch of yourself in the meantime by working or worrying yourself to death?"

It need hardly be said that Leslie yielded to reasoning which was so strongly backed up by his inclinations. It need hardly be said that Moray was only too happy to take a fast friend with him to the antipodes as secretary, sympathiser, and confidential adviser. There had been no further question as to his child accompanying him now. He had merely made some faint resistance for form's sake. And as he felt that her marriage with Ralph Leslie was preordained, it would be well for her happiness that her lover should accompany them. Besides, if he could assist Leslie

to a new career, he owed it to him, since Leslie's rental had been given up to a reserve fund for the liquidators to draw upon.

So the articles of agreement were signed and sealed. The Board of the Sumatra Company gave a superb banquet to the new Resident, at which Moray spoke with knowledge and sound sense, which recommended him alike to directors and shareholders; at which Sir Stamford spoke diffusely, more to his own enjoyment than that of his audience; and at which Mr Leslie, as the Resident's secretary, was likewise landed upon his legs.

The departure was, on the whole, less sad than might have been expected. Moray's spirits had risen with the relief from the depression of inactivity; his heart beat high with his hopes of an active and useful career, in which he might win fame with a second fortune. Then he had regained the daughter he half feared he had lost. As for Grace, she had won her point, and was going in the company of her father and her lover to visit the fairyland of the southern tropics. While Leslie, already a different man, with health in his face, and elasticity in his muscles, had been lifted up to the seventh heaven of happiness. He was ashamed that he did not feel more deeply at parting with his mother—the more so that the lady had been detained in the North by a sharp attack of influenza; but though he loved her dearly, he could not help himself, and then he hoped to see her again very speedily.

And, with a single exception, the little group of friends who had come on board to bid good-bye to the travellers, had no special reason for being in low spirits. There were Sir Stamford and a brother director, *ex*

officio, who, of course, had no cause to feel anything but pleased, and whose presence was a check on any possible effusiveness. There was Winstanley, saying everything that was polite and kind, repeating his assurances as to taking every care of everything and everybody at Glenconan, but as cheerful as the chairman of the Sumatra Company. There was Julia, occasionally whispering into Grace's ear, and weeping on her neck, when at last she took leave of her; but perhaps not altogether sorry, for private reasons of her own, that her fascinating friend was booked for the antipodes. And there was Jack Venables, rather more voluble and decidedly more noisy than was natural even to him; though a close observer—Miss Winstanley, for example—might have remarked that his volubility came by fits and starts. And he was silent and distracted for a time, though with a saddening sense of happiness, when Leslie, leading him aside, fairly broke down in vain efforts to express his devoted gratitude.

"That day on Loch Rosque! —that day on Loch Rosque!" he ejaculated, in answer to Jack's reminder. "It is unworthy of your good sense, Jack, to be perpetually harping upon that. I say, in the words of the warlike Israelitish Judge, 'What have I done in comparison of you?' and you know that I am speaking the truth. No fellow ever acted more nobly than you have done; and it is the more to your credit, though very little to mine, that only a year ago I did not believe it was in you. For the future, behave as you will, I at least can never misunderstand you."

"Have it your own way, then, my good fellow—have it your own

way," answered Jack, lightly, returning the grasp of his friend with one hand, while he passed the other rapidly over his eyes. "But heaven keep us in our senses! what have we here?"

For Leslie had chosen that the interview should take place in the bustle, while the steamer was casting off her moorings in the docks, and most people were occupied about their own concerns. And the interview had been interrupted by a tall Scotch deer-hound, that had charged Mr Venables in a transport of excitement, and now, with a paw upon each shoulder, was rubbing a muzzle against his cheeks.

"Bran here! Bran on the Fire King! Then be sure that Donald Ross cannot be far off. And there the villain is—see, Ralph, behind the funnel, looking half proud and more than half ashamed of himself!"

Perceiving that he had been detected, Donald shuffled forward. His honest face flushed up with pleasure for a moment at the cordial greeting of his two young friends; yet Donald was sad, and looked almost as careworn as Leslie had seemed but a fortnight before. As he told his master afterwards, who was more moved than he would have cared to own, at the unexpected meeting—

"You see, Glenconan, I could not put up with the thought that you would be going away again, though but for a bit, and me never to set eyes upon you. Then there was Miss Grace too—my blessing on the face of her. I would be minding it well, she might be sure, when she was far away, and yet I was fond to get another glimpse at it. So I sat down and wrote privately to the English young lady, and she was very kind and spoke to the gentleman, and he gave me permission to come away, and pro-

mised to say nothing of my coming. But it's a sore heart I have this day, Glenconan, and this day the glen will be a valley of weeping."

Glenconan was much touched and somewhat remorseful. In the excitement of his new hopes he had half forgotten to be sorry, partly perhaps because his sanguine nature was already predicting a happy home-coming. But the simple grief of the poor dependants he was leaving was a reproach to him, though God knew he had felt for them deeply, so long as he had believed himself to be ruined. And besides, the apparition of the old keeper and the presence of Bran, who was now fawning and crouching at his feet in the little cabin, came to him in a fresh breath from his native hills, and brought a flood of bright and sad reminiscences. Donald, with his native shrewdness and delicacy, read what was passing in his master's mind, though he waited respectfully for the master to speak.

"I know, Donald—I know it well; and my own heart would be wellnigh broken but that I believe that things are brightening for us. You must tell them all that I look forward to a happy return, and that we will have greater doings next time than the last."

He knew that his words were commonplace, but what better could he say? Though he felt to Donald as to an old friend, it was not in his nature to unbosom himself to an inferior: as it was, he had been more sentimental than was his habit. He was a man of generous deeds and deep feelings, rather than of smooth phrases. But Donald, who had been only waiting the opportunity, broke out in words of such absolute confidence in Glenconan's return, that in that hour of farewells they came as omens of encouragement des-

tinged to recur to his memory in his exile. And Donald ended realistically—

"And we will be gathering the oak out of the bogs and stacking the old fir-roots against the day when we will have the whole of the country in a blaze, from the rocks of Loch Rosque to the cairn upon Funachan."

When the friends of the travellers were getting ready to go ashore at Gravesend, Donald, in spite of the sorrows of the parting, was a proud and comparatively a happy man. Were not the words of his master ringing in his ears, "Your visit has done me a world of good"? and did not he carry away as a remembrance from his young mistress, with whom he had a long and confidential *tête-à-tête*, the very bit of blue ribbon she had been wearing round her beautiful neck? The only "scene" was made by Bran; and Bran, not unreasonably jealous of Finette—who had been adopted so unaccountably as one of the travelling party—crept under the sofa in his master's cabin, and showed his teeth when they tried to prevail upon him to come forth. The dog knew well that Glenconan was going; and Donald, hurt at the preference, for once had spoken to him roughly.

The boat from Gravesend was

rowed alongside, and a clerk clambering up the side, held out a telegram. "Mr Ralph Leslie on board?" he asked, in a business-like manner—the impassible messenger of fate. Ralph seized the particoloured envelope with a sad foreboding, and tore it open with trembling fingers.

"Pray hold on with the boat for a moment. I shall go ashore with you."

He pulled himself together with an effort. With that mob of people curiously looking on, it was neither the time nor the place for a display of feeling. There was no time for explanations. He passed the telegram to the astonished Moray, and Grace read it over her father's shoulder. He rushed down to his cabin, shouted for a steward, and returned on deck carrying his smaller luggage. A hurried leave-taking; a hasty half-embrace of Grace—some hundred pairs of eyes were centred on them; a final clutch of the hand from her father, with a "Not good-bye, my dear boy, but *au revoir*,"—and Ralph was almost tumbled down the ladder by the impatient officer on duty. As the boat shoved off and the steamer forged ahead, there was an exclamation from one of the men—"Look to the lady! she has fainted!"

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

OUR BREACH WITH THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

IN June of this year exactly a century had passed since King George III. received Mr Adams, the first ambassador from the United States of America to Great Britain. The interest of that event has always been warm in these kingdoms; but the period should become more instructive than it has been in former years, now that speakers and writers among us are gravely recommending a farther dismemberment of the empire. The losses occasioned to the mother country by the war which preceded the separation of the American colonies, and then by the separation itself, does not seem to have been very strongly insisted upon by historians of the times, but they must have been sensibly felt. Especially must have been felt the sudden abolition of colonial appointments, and the drying up of the outflow which the plantations had afforded to our superabundant, restless, and enterprising population. I fancy that a great deal more would have been left for our enlightenment under those heads, had it not been that the French Revolution followed so quickly upon our loss, and swallowed up the first calamity in one still greater. The closeness with which we were, and long continued to be, occupied with French affairs, may also explain why the jealousies and animosities of the contest with America died out on our side of the Atlantic so much more quickly than they did on the other. The Americans had not, as we had, a new and engrossing struggle to divert their feelings; and so they continued to nurse the wrath and

keep it warm, that had been engendered in the days of Chatham and Lord North. It is, I believe, by no means a rule in history that the nation which gets the better of a war or a dispute is the more placable. And certainly, in this case, the success of the Americans did not dispose them to "abate their manly rage" at a time when later events had made our loss of America appear to us a very old story.

Britain seems, when she could take her eyes from Napoleon and look about her, to have felt unwilling that all old ties should be severed; and to have desired that if we could be no longer compatriots, America and ourselves should remember that there was an old relationship that was thicker than water. Our writers persisted in calling the Americans our cousins, but were not answered in a very genial tone. Indeed, whatever may have been the case at the time of the disruption, the United States have now been peopled from so many of the airts, that it is absurd to speak of the whole nation as related to us Britons. In New England and one or two of the older plantations we have kinsmen no doubt; but our cousins, in a strict sense, must be traceable in only a few States of the Union.

Possibly the disinclination to fraternise shown by the Americans was fostered by the unlucky impression made by many of the books of travels in America written by British subjects. Mrs Trollope made immense mischief; and Marryat and Dickens did

not mend matters. Haliburton's works, although full of satire, do not appear to have excited near so much wrath; for he had the art of seeming good-natured when pretty severe. Miss Martineau held out the olive-branch and did something towards softening animosities. Of course we were made aware of the republican indignation: it was lucky for us, perhaps, that the skill of their writers in wounding was not equal to their will to strike. I ought, however, in writing thus, to make most honourable exception of an American writer, who, flourishing while the old jealousy was at its height, and being certainly endowed with much humour and a polished wit, was far superior to the rancorous feeling which was so general. Washington Irving is the writer of whom I am thinking, a man who would have been an honour to any land. I used to study his works a good deal at one time, and I cannot recollect in them any passage exhibiting spite or ill-humour towards the English, while there is large store of genial, polished, and entertaining writing. No American, perhaps, has written in such a cosmopolitan spirit as he.

It is not an uncommon thing for our readers of light literature to yawn over the fashionable productions of the day notwithstanding their merit, and to long for a diversion. To any one so *ennuyé* I would recommend a reference to Irving's 'Sketch-Book' and his 'Tales of a Traveller.' These are not such "screaming" productions as many of Dickens's stories, neither have they the moral bite of poor old Thackeray; still less are they of kin to Ainsworth's 'Jack Sheppard' and the Newgate class of novels. But, without intending in the slightest degree to detract from either of the two celebrated

men first mentioned above (over whose pages I have enjoyed many an hour in paroxysms of what may be called literary riot), I venture to say that the style of Irving was more thorough-bred than that of either of them. As to Ainsworth, he was many stages below the American in refinement. I am not sure but that the latter will be found to recall the humour and the elegance of Addison more forcibly than any writer of this century does it. I don't know how I should feel to-day on reperusing his story of 'The Devil and Tom Walker'; but I can assure any one who cares for my experience that I used to read and re-read it with thorough enjoyment. He has also a tale called 'Golden Dreams' very much to be commended. 'Rip van Winkle' never faded from memory, and requires no reviving, spite of its age.

There was another leading English writer contemporary with those whom I have named above, who, if he had had a little more humour, would in many modes of his lyre have much resembled Irving. I mean the first Lord Lytton. Of course I remember that his lordship's genius traversed many a field of literature on which Irving never ventured; yet where they were on common ground they were not unlike.

Another American writer who was favourably known in Britain while the waters of Marah were yet unsweetened, was N. P. Willis. I do not for a moment put him on the same level as Washington Irving; but he was like him in superiority to prejudice, and in the endeavour after broad and worthy sympathies. He not only came among us with an amicable disposition; but he cemented the good relations which were begun at his appearance among us by

wooing and wedding an attractive English girl. I have had many acquaintances who remembered the time of Willis's courtship, of which Woolwich was the scene. That was when William IV. was king, when 'Pickwick' was coming out in numbers, and when the "Dog's-meat Brigade," as it was derisively called, was fighting under De Lacy Evans for Isabella of Spain. Mention of Willis and his love-making brings back to me a Woolwich story told me by a friend who remembered those times well. There had been an infamous attempt there to raise an ill-feeling against somebody connected with the garrison, by the dropping of unsigned letters. The secret stabbers knew their work so well that they did not throw their poison in the way of people of influence, who would probably have treated it with contempt, but cast it before silly gossiping beings, who would be sure to give it all the publicity possible. Among those communicated with, was a young officer of long tongue and weak brain, who picked up one day in his barrack-room a paper which had evidently been thrown through the open window. Of course, although he did not believe a word of the slander, he could not refrain from telling all his acquaintance of the document which he had found, characterising it as scurrilous, infamous, and so on.

"Dear me!" said a lady in one of the groups among whom he was circulating his news, "who can have been so wicked? I suppose, Mr P——, the thing was anonymous."

"Indeed," replied P——, "you may say that as much as you like. It's about the most anonymous thing I ever saw, and I've seen a great deal."

I hope I shall not be altogether

tedious if I mention here that in the house of Willis's father-in-law was frequently to be seen the lady who sat for Mrs Leo Hunter in 'Pickwick.' Indeed I have been told that it was in that house that Dickens photographed her. The authors of 'The Rejected Addresses' used to visit there at the same period.

I can recollect the Beecher-Stowe period and all the excitement, but cannot decide whether, on the whole, the feeling between the Americans and ourselves was improved by the 'Uncle Tom' frenzy. It made the Southern States bitter against us, without gaining us adherents, except among certain abolitionist bodies, in the North. Looking calmly at the matter now, it is hard to conceive how Mrs Stowe's book created such *furore* as undoubtedly it did. We had settled our negro question nearly twenty years before, and there was at the moment nothing to make the public mind especially susceptible. The power of the book itself might be set down as the efficient cause of all the effervescence; only, if it were so, the power was not for all time nor for a very long time. One of those hits was made for which it is impossible fully to account on any fixed principle, and which go to prove the large power that circumstances sometimes exercise over literary affairs. There ought to be no such thing as luck in what is purely an intellectual matter. Yet who will say that luck has not much to do with ephemeral successes like this? Since Samson lost his wager through people ploughing with his heifer, there have constantly been wheels within wheels to regulate the result of intellectual achievement.

Britain and America being so necessary to each other as they

are, the probability is that their old feud would have died out soon after the middle of the century, had not their civil war untowardly come in the way, and the Trent and Alabama affairs occurred. As it is, one may hope that the two

countries are once more drawing together again, and that the full century which has elapsed since Mr Adams made his bow in London has seen, not the worst only, but the last of the ill-will which operated so detrimentally for them both.

STORIES ABOUT THE COLONIES.

Thought of our making away with our colonies has led me to reflect on the number of people of all ranks whom I have known to emigrate to them. Once these outlets are gone, we shall find the want of them most inconvenient. It is, however, a particular case of emigration which takes possession of me for the moment. A needlewoman who had passed her *première jeunesse* bestowed her hand upon a young artisan, and was thought to have made a good match, for the husband was well to do. Things, however, did not go on so well as they began. This may have been (although I do not know that it was so) because the man followed two professions—that is to say, he was a preacher as well as a mechanic; and the cure of souls may have distracted his energies from his manual employment. Be this as it may, the couple found it desirable to change their abode, and they started for the South Pacific, whether to do missionary or handicraft work, or both, I cannot now recollect. I never heard of their coming back again, and hope they may have found their new home better to live in than their old. The husband had, however, an aunt—a tall, spare, and rather sour old maid, by no means fair to look upon, but, like her nephew, much given to religious exercises. Now this spinster, at a missionary meeting or some other profitable assem-

bly, became aware of some of the practices followed by the natives of those southern islands, and was so deeply impressed thereby that she had a dream, which, from her emotion in telling it, must have been equal in horror to that reported by "maudlin Clarence."

To relieve her mind of the affright left by this vision, she did what hundreds of simple country folks are very apt to do. As the dream referred to "foreign parts," she went to take counsel with a naval captain who had seen a great deal of the world, though I believe he had been but little among the Pacific Islands. Moreover, he was in this case an unfortunate counsellor to hit upon, because he had (rather unjustly, as I fear) a not very kindly recollection of the sempstress, who had worked a great deal at his house, and whom he had thought a whining, canting creature. I knew the woman well, and feel bound to say that I thought her more cheerful and less censorious than nine-tenths of the "unco guid," among whom I once had a large acquaintance. But that by the way; the captain detested her. And now the dialogue which I am going to transcribe will be understood.

"Asking your pardon, Cappen T. I've come to you, because I'm in great distress."

"You look out of sorts, Rebecca. What's the matter?"

"I've had a terrible dream, sir."

"Is that all? I know nothing about dreams. What's the use of coming to me?"

"I come to you, Cappen, because you've a-travelled in foreign parts, and know the ways of the poor heathen there. I dreamed—oh, how shall I tell it? 'Tis too dreadful!"

"Only a nonsensical dream, my good woman, after all."

"Nonsensical! you won't call it that when you know. I dreamed—oh, mercy on me! I dreamed that Temperance was a eat."

"What the deuce does that mean?"

"Be they not cannibulls out there?"

"Oh, I remember. New Zealand, isn't it? Now, don't you be frightened. They have been known to do such things; but they'll never touch her. She's a damned deal too tough. Those villains like tender food."

"You think so, Cappen?"

"No doubt about it. A New Zealander who would put his teeth into such leather, even if he were famishing, would be turned out of his tribe. Thing's impossible."

"Well, that *do* ease my mind. Temperance isn't just a child, and the Lord's mercy it is that such is the case. I thank you, Cappen T. I shall be more composed now."

The dream must have been a mere illusion, for I heard of Temperance being alive and well some years after it was dreamed. Possibly she flourishes still.

While I am musing on the colonies, I will mention another anecdote; but the scene changes now to the West Indies. The negro servant of a certain colonel out there had a propensity which not many negroes suffered from in my experience. He was rather fond of strong waters, and would

occasionally help himself from his master's bottle. The colonel, having much suspicion but no proof that this was the case, privately marked the height of the brandy in the bottle with chalk. The nigger, seeing the white streak, guessed why it was put there, and, with much inward chuckling, levelled up with water after taking his next *chasse*, saying, "Hei! massa dam cunning, but me cunning too."

Massa, however, was not at the end of his resources yet. He perceived the weakness of the liquor, and guessed what had happened. "Look here, Sambo, you villain!" said he, "you've been helping yourself to the brandy. Now mind I know it, so take care what you are about."

"Me, massa! me tief de brandy! I nebber hear such a ting. I wouldn't do it, sar, if it was to save for me life. Sepmegad, massa! if me was to drap down dead dis minnit, me nebber touch de bottle. Try, now; measure him, and see if he not so full as dis marnin'!"

"I have tried, and it is rather fuller than otherwise."

"Berry well, den, sar; how can massa say me tief it when it grow?"

"Your challenge about measuring, you rascal, only confirms my suspicion of what you have been at. You have drunk some of the spirit, and filled the place of it with water."

"Drink de 'pirit an' put watter! My—my—my king! Ladgad! what is we to hear nex? Prapsin me bin tief massa's beeftake and giv him billy-goat, or put sage-leaf in the cannister and take him tea. Me not 'prised to hear nuttin' after what massa say. Six year me lib wid ole Cap'n Coglan of de Slashers: him twice so 'tingy as massa: him

really cubbich" (i.e., close, near, literally covetous); "and what him tell me when him cut for him 'tick? Him say, 'Sambo, you more hannerster dan de day; me can trus' you wid dallars dat nebber count.'"

"Stop your jabber, and draw the cork of that other bottle. Now pour some of the brandy into a glass. Very well. You see this little bead. If I put it into the fresh-opened brandy it floats, because the spirit is pure: if I put it into this other that you have been tampering with, it sinks, because of the water. So I can detect you."

"Him swim in de 'trong brandy, and him sink in de weak. Massa too clebber. It no use trying for impose upon massa. Me take only lilly drap—so: not enough for drown a sand-fly, to give ole granny Rap when she hab pean in de 'tummick; and massa fine it out. Hei!"

"Yes, I tell you again to mind what you are about, or you will certainly feel the cowskin."

Now a friend of mine, whose father had once owned Sambo, met that delinquent while the detection of this theft was fresh in his mind. Deeply impressed he seemed and contrite, for he said, "Massa fine me out wid a lilly dam bead" (which Sambo pronounced as a dissyllable), "when me tink me too many for him. Berry well. If massa so clebber as dat, Garamighty is more clebberer, and will fine out whatebber innocent lilly ting me do. It no use tryin' for catch him. Me will go an' jine relijjan." That meant, become a member of one of the many religious sects which were bidding at that time for the negro connection, of whom the Baptists were by far the most successful fishers of men. If he kept his word, he was a back-

slider; for, after no very long time, he got fum-fum for purloining again.

Sambo was a creole, two or three generations off, perhaps, from the ancestor or ancestress who had undergone the mid-passage. I have, however, come across some native Africans, who were on the whole not half such rogues as the darkies who had been bred under the white man's rule. They never got to speak a very intelligible dialect of English; and most of them remained all their days in a primitive state. I can remember one day when I was out in the woods with a companion, ready to shoot a parrot or a wild pig, to cut down a cabbage-tree or to capture a yellow snake—when, in short, we were trying by any means to kill a tropical day—that we found ourselves unexpectedly on the border of some cleared ground. In this opening were growing two or three plantains, two or three yams, pumpkins of some size, and sweet potatoes; but the most remarkable object there was a shed about six feet long and three feet broad, coming up to a ridge some two and a half feet high in the centre of its length, and resting on the ground at both sides. Its transverse section was a triangle. The construction was simple in the extreme. Branches of trees, roughly trimmed, were set up in pairs, at distances between the pairs of two feet or thereabouts. Each stick had been run into the ground at one end; at the other, that is to say at the ridge of the shed, it was bound by a withe to its ally. A few smaller wattles were interwoven among the principals, and the outside covered with palm-thatch. There was scarcely time to remark the ashes of a fire, and an old iron pot near the end of

the shed, before a grizzled woolly head was protruded, the owner of which was, of course, prostrate, or he could not have lain under the thatch. He proved to be an old African; and when he perceived that his visitors meant no harm to him, he crept out, an ancient eremite with marvellously little raiment. This interesting person had, it seemed, been set free at the general emancipation; and not seeing the advantage of doing any more work, and not caring for society, had squatted on the outskirts of a property, and built himself the habitation just described. His *supellex* consisted of the iron pot aforesaid, and a hollow bamboo for water, with a cover to it and a string to hold it or hang it by. His carpet, bed, or whatever it ought to be called, was sedge obtained from some neighbouring pond. He informed us that he raised his own "bread-kind"—i.e., yams, plantains, &c.—and that he sustained himself therewith, cooking some of the food in the iron pot. His fire, which we had at first thought to be a heap of cold ashes, was really alive, and crackled up on being fanned with a plantain-leaf. He could manage generally to keep it going; but if it failed, he had to go some way to the nearest hut to beg a little fire, which he would carry back in a calabash. His matchet, or small cutlass, served for horticultural purposes, and for dinner-knife; and an old hoe sufficed him for planting. In this calm retreat he passed his days; liable to ejectionment, but not in much danger of it.

The only information we could get from him was "Massa buy me a bea," the last words meaning *at the bay*. Why he had taken to solitary squatting could not be ascertained; but laziness probably had much to do with the choice.

He got off his usurped garden plenty to eat with extremely little labour. The mosquitoes (which were about his settlement in clouds), the heat of the weather, the stifling oppression of the shelter which he had made for himself, seemed to cause him no inconvenience. The poet's line,

"Man wants but little here below,"

was certainly exemplified here; but what an existence it must have been! After "we left him alone in his glory" that day, I never saw, and I don't think I ever heard of, him again.

About the time when I saw this old recluse, an event happened in the neighbourhood of my dwelling, which, although one reads about such occurrences now and then, does not often come within one's actual experience. I mean a drum-head court-martial—a summary method of dealing with military offences which has rarely been resorted to for many years past. In the colony of which I write there was then a white regiment, not one of the nicest in the service, nor, if all tales be true that have been told about it, a very harmonious one as regarded its officers. Possibly its character may in some degree be explained by saying that it was commanded by a man who had risen from the ranks. This colonel, now an elderly man, although he undoubtedly possessed many soldierly qualities, knew not the art of making himself agreeable; and although he ruled with a pretty tight hand, there was very little affection for him either among the officers or in the ranks. His name was Samuel Sowers, but he was generally known as Sour Sam.

Now as Sour Sam's regiment had been some time abroad, and as (as has been hinted) it did not

work together in perfect concord, it was not altogether astonishing that a little insubordinate feeling sometimes gathered in it. But military law was severe in those days, and Sam never hesitated to put it in force; so everybody knew that indiscipline, where he was concerned, was a dangerous thing. It had, however, unfortunately happened that one of those disturbing spirits who are known in the services as "lawyers" had lately come out with a draft and done a deal of mischief. He was a long-tongued, plausible knave, who managed to acquire a certain influence among the men, which influence he used for fomenting discontent. How far things had gone was never made public; but I am afraid that some dangerous plots were hatching. So far as was known, the colonel was quite ignorant of the state of things, and the action he took afterwards was quoted as proof of his extreme readiness and presence of mind on emergency: he no doubt showed firmness and decision, but I doubt whether he could have been kept in the dark up to the point where he interfered—he was too shrewd and too heedful for that.

Suspecting evil or not, he had an ugly case to deal with one morning. There was a parade between five and six (thus early on account of the heat), and the proceedings had not lasted long when considerable unsteadiness was observed in the ranks, particularly in one wing. Having once or twice called upon the men to be steady, and upon the officers to check disorder, old Sam at length rode up to the disturbed point, crying, "Are the men mad? what the devil's the matter?" when his eye lighted upon the "lawyer" whom I have mentioned, flinging

himself about, pushing other men, and evidently endeavouring to produce a commotion. "Let that man fall out," said the colonel. "Private Skinner to the front." Private Skinner did not seem half inclined to obey; but his captain coming up to him and ordering him out, he thought proper to advance, but in most unmilitary fashion.

"Hillo! what the devil's this!" exclaimed the colonel. "Carry your arms, soldier, and behave in a less slovenly way, or I'll send you to the guard-room." Skinner, however, only carried himself more improperly; he flung down his firelock, and said something about having been kept a cursed sight too long on parade.

"Oh, that's your idea, is it!" said the colonel. Then, without a moment's hesitation, "Send a corporal and a file of men from the 5th Company to make this man prisoner. Send a drum to the front. Fall out Captain Loveday, Captain Fisher, and Lieutenant Slade, who will immediately try Private Skinner of the 5th Company for insubordination. Let the regiment order arms and stand at ease."

In less than five minutes from the commission of his offence, Private Skinner was arraigned before this improvised tribunal. The other men, rather astonished at the unusual occurrence, were of a sudden quiet, and looked curiously on. There was little need of formality or evidence. The members of the court were themselves witnesses of the crime. In another five minutes they had pronounced the offender guilty, and sentenced him (such a court was competent to do so in those days) to receive two hundred lashes.

Captain Loveday reported this result to Colonel Sowers, who was

about to confirm the sentence, and have it then and there carried into effect, when, always cautious and cool, he said: "On consideration, I won't confirm on the spot. The man was insolent to me personally, and I must not appear vindictive. I'll dismiss the men to breakfast, but let the assembly sound again at ten o'clock." The prisoner was taken to the guard-room, to breakfast with what appetite he might; and the men at their messes were excited enough about what had happened, and the mischance which had come to the leader of their indiscretions.

Sour Sam took his repast of pigeons, avocado pears, bread and honey; possibly he took counsel also with himself, but I rather think the old chief's mind was made up before he saw his meal. At ten o'clock the bugle sounded, and the regiment fell in. It was not, however, marched out of the barrack enclosure, but to a retired portion thereof, where a high wall and some palm-trees made a shade. Here it was formed on three sides of a square, facing inwards; while on the fourth side, close to the wall, stood the ugly triangle, to which were fastened the transgressors who underwent corporal punishment. The regimental doctor stood near, as did also the drum-major, and three stout drummers.

"March up the prisoner," ordered the colonel. And thereupon came forward an escort guarding the rebellious Skinner, who seemed sobered by his two or three hours of reflection; for he looked pale, and cast glances that were anything but affectionate at the uninviting tripod. The sentence of the court was then confirmed, and the punishment ordered to be inflicted on the spot.

Skinner, as he took off his coat and prepared himself for his ordeal,

quailed so, and put on such a rueful look, that the men, his pupils, who were observing him, were rather puzzled.

"He's never flinching?" whispered a grenadier to his left-hand man.

"Not possible," was the scarce audible reply; "but, by ——! he looks queer."

The faith of the misguided men was beginning to be shaken. The preparations, however, went on. The doctor having felt the prisoner's pulse, made no objection to the punishment taking place, notwithstanding a most appealing look from Skinner to him. This look, which the men saw, disgusted them infinitely; for they like to see a culprit, when he *has* outraged the law, go through his expiation like a man. In another minute the craven wretch was fast in position; the executive drummer was ordered to do his duty, and the first lash fell across the man's shoulders. He had kept himself from exclaiming hitherto, but now he yelled. "One," called the drum-major, in a strong ringing tone, and the cat fell again. Another shriek, and the drum-major called "two" in his impassive monotone. The third cut elicited a long howl, and the men by this time were visibly disturbed. Audibly they were murmuring, "Blast him! he's dunghill;" "I'll never drink nor play again with such a creature as that;" while the officers were calling, "Steady, men, steady. Look to your front, and not a word."

At the drum-major's announcement of "six," the would-be mutineer, in his misery, after yelling like a hound, cried out, pain and terror making him forget respect and policy—

"Sam, Sam, let me down this time, and I'll never offend you again as long as I live!"

The colonel, not in the least discomposed by the familiar address, sat heavy on his horse, and was heard to mutter—

"No, I'll be damned if I do. If the doctor doesn't take you down, you'll get your whole sentence."

And the miserable castigation went on. The drum-major had, however, not got to "twenty," when the doctor, observing the fellow's head to droop, held up his hand to the drummer to arrest the lash, and again felt the man's pulse.

"He's not fit to take any more, sir," called the doctor, raising his hand to his hat.

"Oh!" said the colonel, "then take him down and march him to hospital. He's hardly the man to lead a mutiny."

A suppressed something—it was like a muffled cheer—came from the ranks at this remark. The officers again called "Steady," and "Silence"; the prisoner disappeared; and the colonel, before he wheeled back into line, turned to his men and said—

"Soldiers, that's not the sort of fellow to lead men with any heart in them. His behaviour has been a better lesson than anything I could say if I had talked for an hour."

He had served in the ranks himself, be it remembered, and knew well what the rank and file were made of.

Thus ended the drum-head court-martial; but thus did not end the punishment of Private Skinner, the self-elected military tribune. Before his couple of days' rest in hospital were over, he was aware, through the sick orderlies, of the sad impression which his poltroonery had created among his comrades. It was not unusual to see a man take a pretty severe flogging without flinching or making the slightest moan, and this when he had been seduced by infirmity or temper into breach of discipline; but it especially behoved a deliberate offender, who had put himself forward to try conclusions with the law, and to lead the necks of others into the halter, to show that he had got some backbone in him. The fellow was jeered at, annoyed, shunned as a comrade, and in every permissible way made to feel the weight of adverse opinion. I heard that, when he shortly after died of fever, he considered his end as really a release. As for Sour Sam, he became for a time a popular colonel; but he couldn't, or he didn't care to, improve such occasions, and subsided again to his old position—respected but not loved. He was always, however, colonel of his own regiment up to the time when, according to the changes of the service, he ceased to hold a regimental command.

SOME DISSENTING ACQUAINTANCES.

When, a little above, I said, in writing of the sempstress Temperance, that I once had a tolerably extensive acquaintance among the "unco guid," I was thinking principally, though not exclusively, of Wesleyan Methodists. These, though very rigid in matters of conduct, and though a little too sour in some cases to appear very

pleasant to the outside world, were, I believe, for the most part quite sincere Christians, endeavouring to live according to their profession. They were, when I knew most about them, on excellent terms with the Church of England, where they never objected to attending service on days which were not recognised as holy-days by their

own persuasion, where they were for the most part (and would have thought it a scandal if they were not) christened and married, and in the precincts of which they were invariably buried according to the rite of the Establishment. Their rivalry with the State Church was not then political; it was more in the way of zeal, sincerity, and bringing a sense of religion to the minds of the people. And in this emulation they were very successful, as was apparent not only by the numbers who joined their societies, but by the conduct of all the more earnest of the Established clergy, who hastened to forsake the ways of the jolly, sporting, self-indulgent, and often not very moral parsons of old days, and to conform themselves in dress, habits of life, and preaching, to the Dissenting standard. The character of Wesley's work was by that time understood, and in many quarters appreciated. That he had been in former days most unjustly regarded is apparent from remarks in the literature of those times. I lately came across a passage in Walpole's 'Last Journals' which contains proof of how cruelly the man was misunderstood. "Wesley," says Walpole, "the artful patriarch of the Methodists, to court his patron Lord Dartmouth, published a calm address to the colonies, where he knew it had no chance of being seen. He probably hoped for a deanery or a bishopric."

Nobody in my time refused respect to Wesley; but I think that his followers, by demonstrations of superior sanctity, and by a little censoriousness now and then, produced two very undesirable effects. First, they made the less serious world outside of their fold rather spiteful towards them, and very ready to mark and to publish any slip that one of their fraternity

might make; and of course they *did* stumble sometimes. Second, they caused the profaner spirits of the day to be more profane in speech and act than they otherwise would have been, out of sheer resistance to the spiritual tyranny (as the profane ones called it) which the Methodists had in some degree established, and were endeavouring to extend. Frequenters of ale-houses, games, fairs, cock-fights, merry-makings, and so on, were often hit very hard by the faithful; and they retaliated by being guilty of much irreverence which, without the so-called provocation of the saints, they probably would have kept clear of.

As regards the exultation with which any lapse of theirs was marked, I remember one gross immorality committed under the cloak of religion, which caused the enemies of the society very loudly to blaspheme. That was a really bad and damaging business. But there were smaller failings, often in the direction of ebriety, to which some of the poor souls were tempted (we know what a temptation drink is in certain temperaments); and didn't the unconverted call "Fie upon them! fie upon them! There, there, so would we have it!" I remember a wretched preacher whose wife was afflicted with dipsomania; and I need hardly describe the sort of life he led, between the holy horror of saints on the one hand, and the impious satisfaction of sinners on the other.

One very weak vessel, a demonstrative brother, and a stickler for mint, anise, and cummin, more than once brought great scandal on his people. He was a butcher; and one market-day, when suddenly the magistrates made an inspection of weights and measures, it was found that he had no steelyard.

"This is very strange," said a justice; "you stand here selling flesh, and you've no means of weighing what you sell. How on earth do you arrange with your customers?"

"I borreys."

"Rather a poor dependance, when all are selling, for you to weigh with other people's balances."

The inspectors were not at all satisfied: but it was not a punishable offence to be without a steelyard; and, though feeling themselves to be baffled, they were passing to another stall, when an old woman came running out from a shed hard by, calling—

"Lord, measters! here they be. I guessed what th'ould cheat was after, and I found 'em behind the door."

Sad to relate, the steelyard was found to be false in a considerable degree, and not in favour of the buyer. The case was sifted in a magistrate's court; the brother had a narrow escape of the treadmill; the commotion in Bethel was very grievous; and the ungodly triumphed not a little.

As to what was said above about many men acting and speaking with a freedom which they did not really feel, as a sort of defiance to the warnings and denunciations of the righteous, I shall never forget a speech which once I heard from a man who knew a great deal better than he spoke. I was very little at the time—so little that there must have been some special reason why I was, in a public place, standing one day near one or two men, without anybody from home near me. At that time I don't think that I had ever heard a breath that was sceptical or scoffing with regard to religion, and did not know that such thing could be. I could not help hearing the conversation of

the men near me, and was very much disturbed to hear one of them say (probably in allusion to the Dissenters) something about their "preaching and praying humbug." I concluded that the speaker had forgotten himself, and ventured to say—

"Oh, Mr Saunders, you don't mean that?"

The answer was, "Not mean it, my dear; why shouldn't I mean it?"

The discussion had already got too hard for me, who never deemed that, upon such a matter, there could be two opinions at all; but I did manage to rejoin—

"Because people who can talk that way will never go to heaven."

"My dear," said the reprobate, with the utmost mildness, "I don't want to go to heaven; have got no fancy for heaven. I shouldn't like the place, by all accounts that I can get of it."

Doubtful whether I heard aright, I stared for a second at my antagonist; then, utterly shocked and frightened, I made off as fast as my legs would carry me. Home was too distant, and my burden too heavy, for me to wend my way straight thither: so I rushed at the door of a relative who lived near; and when I could recover breath and utterance after such a shock, renewed my grief by repeating what I had heard. My relative calmed me, and sent me home under escort, advanced one step in acquaintance with the works of the devil.

The man who had so disturbed me was not (as I came to know afterwards) a very wicked person or an evil liver. He went regularly to church, and bore a very good character, though doubtless it was always true of him that he did not govern his tongue very strictly. After I was grown up I saw him upon what proved to be

his deathbed, when he spoke calmly of his approaching end, and made so many remarks about the conduct of his funeral, as made one hope, from his anxiety about beginning the journey, that he had at length come to the knowledge of some goal at which he might not object to arrive.

My friends the Nonconformists once made a serious mistake, for which they might have had to pay; but I think they escaped on promise of not repeating the error. They held a feast—whether of a religious, secular, or mixed character, I cannot say; but it was a substantial entertainment, whereat were discussed pies, puddings, cold dishes, and such solid food as is generally to be found at picnics; and they held it in their chapel. A few days after, they had notice that the chapel, having been put to decidedly secular use, had become chargeable with various rates, taxes, and licences. How they

came to make such a blunder puzzles me now more than it did at the time, for they had many shrewd cautious members in their society. I ought to add, too, that a great many of them were sincere and conscientious Christians. My thoughts, I find, have been running over things which tell against them, but that is accident: I am quite aware that they effected a great deal of good which but for them would never have been done at all. And it is with much sorrow of heart that I compare the simpler Dissenters whom I knew with the political fraternities that have succeeded them. I am quite sure that there was not one of my acquaintances of old days who would not have entertained as great a horror of Mr Bradlaugh as I do. Yet I have lived to see a leading Dissenter pointing out this same Bradlaugh to a constituency as a fit and proper person to send to Parliament.

ABOUT MAYORS.

This year London has had to lament the death of the Lord Mayor, it being more than an age since a former Lord Mayor died in office. According to the notices which have been going the round of the papers, Lord Mayors were much more given to dying while in office in the eighteenth century. I have not calculated the chances according to *La Place* or *De Morgan*, but I should judge that, as the office is seldom held for more than a year, the odds are against the decease of any Lord Mayor while in the chair. A few months ago the opinion was prevalent that there would soon be no Lord Mayor either to live or die—that the office was doomed, in fact. But the mayoralty has since shown itself

not so easy a thing to kill. It is only fair that an office which has lasted so long and become so venerable should be spared and cherished until clear proof can be adduced that it is no longer serviceable, and I am not aware that such proof has been forthcoming. Though I know very little about civic business, never go to see the annual show, and never attend the Lord Mayor's feasts, yet I own that I should regret much to know that the mayoralty had become a thing of the past.

I suppose that nine-tenths of the part of our population who could claim benefit of clergy make acquaintance with the Lord Mayor of London through 'Whittington and his Cat.' That sounds but a

frail link of attachment; nevertheless, it has probably given the august wearer of the chain a considerable hold on our affections. And there are little passages in the chronicles of the realm connecting the mayoralty with the pride, pomp, and circumstance of the past, which must plead eloquently for it with all who have not a craze for pulling down. I confess to a great respect for Walworth, the magistrate who smote Wat Tyler with his mace. I am quite satisfied that he was the man who really put down the insurrection and, for that turn, saved the State. As for Richard, I don't believe it was in him to win over the people as he is reported to have done. It may have been politic to give the King the credit, but I have always accorded the whole honour of that eventful day to the Lord Mayor. Walworth did not incline to the belief that "force is no remedy," but has left us a pretty apt example of the fallacy of that doctrine. If we had understood, like him, the use of force, and been as bold as he was in the application of it, we might have smashed the Mahdi, instead of being, as we are, the laughing-stock of all Europe. The mayors held, no doubt, perilous places during all our civil wars; and if we reflect on the offer of the crown made by the Lord Mayor and Corporation to Richard III., it must be clear that—at least sometimes—the goodwill of the civic body was of vast importance. It is to be supposed, too, that if the ill-advised King Charles had marched on London from Oxford, the Lord Mayor would have smarted for the part he took on the side of the Parliament.

On looking into Haydn, I find that London first had a *maire* or

mayor in Henry II.'s time, and that it first had a right honourable lord mayor in the reign of Edward III. I also read that in 1363 Sir Henry Pickard, who had been Lord Mayor in 1357, sumptuously entertained in one day four monarchs—Edward, King of England; John, King of France; the King of Cyprus; and David, King of Scotland,—the Black Prince and many of the nobility being present.

Since communication between the provinces and London has become so easy, provincial mayors have been fond of claiming fraternity with the great City magnate, and of coming to town to show themselves on grand occasions. There is, however, one of these provincials who will by no means admit that any effulgence can be reflected on him by his "forgathering" with the London authorities; this is the Lord Mayor of York, whose is the elder lordship of the two. The London magistrate can well afford to yield precedence to his brother of York whenever the two come into juxtaposition, because he is infinitely the stronger in point of wealth and state; and as to all other English mayors, they are to him like stars when the sun is awake. Even in the provinces, however, the municipal presidency might be attended with some danger. I read in Carew that the Mayor of Bodmin in Cornwall, by name Boyer, was in the reign of Edward VI. hanged before his own door, for his conduct in regard to some local disturbance. Carew, in first announcing the fact, makes it appear as startling as possible by saying that Sir Anthony Kingston, the Provost-Marshal of the King's army, after being entertained by Boyer, took him out and hanged him. But he afterwards smooths away the extreme sharpness of the facts by

admitting that Kingston did not condemn the mayor, but only came to carry out a sentence pronounced elsewhere; and that he sat at Boyer's table in order that he might gain a little time to give certain hints of impending fate which, if he (the mayor) could have understood them, might have warned him to make his escape before he was arrested. As I receive the narration, Kingston would have been glad if Boyer had taken himself off. After the stupid fellow had failed to do so, and was seized, a follower of his, who had been engaged in the commotion for which he suffered, stood forth and offered to die in his place, acknowledging that he was equally guilty. Sir Anthony did not accept the substitute, and was thought to show clemency in not hanging the man after his leader.

There was a mayor of Brecon knighted in her present Majesty's reign for a very gallant defence of his town-hall, which was attacked by an immense mob of many thousands, headed by one Frost. The only troops available for the defence were a subaltern's party. They manned the building, were supported most gallantly and decidedly by the mayor, and in turn made a vigorous, and, as it turned out, successful defence. The mob, being so numerous, took a good deal of shooting from the small detachment before it would retreat; but fortunately it was unable to wear out the smart little band, and finally it took itself off, leaving several patriots dead and wounded on the field. The soldiers possibly would not have held out as they did but for the unwavering civil support of the magistrate, who never flinched from his duty; and the corporation would not have saved their hall if the military had not stood by them with extraordi-

nary valour and constancy. The brave mayor was wounded during the attack, but did not forsake his post. He was rewarded, as I have said, by getting a handle put to his name, and the subaltern who conducted the defence was promoted to the rank of captain.

Later on than that, a mayor of Preston behaved very well in suppressing a serious riot. I had the account of the affair from an eyewitness, who told me that eleven persons were killed before the rioters would disperse. In this case one of the insurgents was thought to have behaved with great bravery; for, after the troops got the order to "make ready" (which generally rather staggers a tumultuous assemblage, although it may have been obstinate enough up to that point), he shouted to the mob to stand fast and fear nothing, ran out and headed them, and led as many as would follow him almost up to the muzzles of the muskets. At the first discharge he fell, shot through the spine. The wounded were, of course, taken to hospital, and there all the medical men in the town did what they could for their relief. My informant, speaking to his doctor the following day, remarked: "Well, though that fellow who waved them on may have been a rebel, he was a gallant man; pity his cause was so bad." To which the doctor rejoined—

"I am not so sure about his bravery. He lost his life (for he must die) under a misapprehension. He thought the old orders were still in force, which enjoined her Majesty's troops when acting against a mob to load the first time with blank cartridge; so, believing that there was absolutely no danger until the second discharge, he thought he could afford to act the hero."

This fellow was too clever by half. There had been an order about firing first with blank cartridge, the object of it being, of course, to frighten rioters without injuring them; but when this

order came to be generally known, and it could no longer serve a merciful purpose, it was rescinded. No such order was in force at the time of the last riot which I have mentioned.

HOBART PACHA AND THE TORPEDO.

In the last section I drifted towards gunpowder. That being so, I could scarcely avoid casting a thought towards what Hobart Pacha wrote in this Magazine in the month of June regarding torpedoes. The submarine mine or infernal machine is to the imagination so formidable an agent that one does not wonder at the thought of it producing a "scare." The scare can never, by mere pen and ink, be shown to be uncalled for; nothing but experience of the torpedo not being so deadly as it is painted can ever relieve our minds as to its effects. It must be used in war before we can discover the extent to which it can revolutionise operations of war; so that, for the present, the torpedo is an object of speculation to the great mass of naval and military men, as well as to civilians; and a sufficiently ugly-looking object it is.

Hobart Pacha, however, has had (what so few have had) some experience of the power of the torpedo—not a conclusive experience (I don't gather from his paper that he pretends to that), but enough to make him one of the best living witnesses, if not the very best living witness, of what the torpedo can effect, and how its benevolent intentions may be foiled. So, as the case now stands, we may, I think, take comfort; and we may say with Bottom to the fair beings who were already enough harassed by the perils of the seas: "Ladies, or fair ladies, I would wish you, or,

I would request you, or, I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble; my life for yours." Waiting farther trial, we have the testimony and the opinion of an expert to the effect that alarm on this subject is more a scare than a well-founded apprehension. For my part, I am quite inclined to think with Hobart Pacha, not only out of respect for the arguments which he has used while discussing the subject, but for another reason which I will venture to state.

Hitherto the terror of mines, petards, powder-bags, and other agencies for producing sudden demolitions and eruptions in war, has been out of proportion to their general effects on the operations. Now and then, no doubt, a mine well designed, well executed, and exploded at the right moment, may have appreciably affected a siege, a defence, a depot, or a military movement; but I am informed that if the whole number of mines that may have been used in a war or a campaign be weighed against the share they may have had in producing the result of it, the real importance of explosions will be much diminished in the mind of the inquirer. Why this is so I do not find it so easy to state. Certainly a mine might be so constructed and exploded as to do in an instant what it might take months to do by other means, or what perhaps slower means might never effect at all. A cleverly managed explosion might destroy

thousands of men, indispensable bulwarks, stores innumerable; it might open or block a passage; it might disorganise and bring to nought an excellently planned movement. But somehow or other in practice what mining *does* effect is infinitely less than what it *might* effect. If the powers of gunpowder and detonating substances are beyond question irresistible, the conditions under which those powers become operative seem difficult to conjoin amid the chances, the changes, the scares, the hurries, the mistakes of actual warfare.

In old days, I believe, when gunpowder was much inferior in quality to what it now is, and much more difficult to accumulate in large quantity, it was quite a common thing, when once a general had succeeded in constructing a formidable mine, to consider the struggle between him and his opponent as settled. He invited the other side to send a commission of officers for the purpose of ascertaining and testifying that the mine had really been made and loaded; and the result of such a survey often was a capitulation or a retreat, under the conviction that to hold out while such a factor was ready to blow them and theirs to the skies was simple madness. But this extreme respect for mines appears to have become modified after "villanous saltpetre" had become a familiar substance. Engineers now began to think that too could play at the game of explosions. Fortresses were countermined; that is to say, they were furnished in advance with systems of mines and galleries, so complete, that if a besieger should attempt to make his way by underground charges of powder, he would speedily find it was "diamond cut diamond" between the attack and defence and that while planning

a little *artifice de feu* for his enemy's behoof, he might be burrowing into a pyrotechnic spring not less ingenious than his own.

Thus arose the art (such as it was) of subterranean warfare—a strife sufficiently horrid in conception, wherein the combatants sought each other like rats or moles, and destroyed each other like fiends in devious darkness of the earth's recesses. But the practice was far behind the theory as regarded carnage and devastation; insomuch that in these days it is a question whether it be worth while to incur the labour and expense of countermining a place.

Now the early pretensions of the mine, and the apprehensions which it so reasonably excited, are so like to the boasts of the torpedo in the present day and the alarm which it creates, that, for myself, I am much disposed to accept the augury of Hobart Pacha, and to believe that the shock of the torpedo may be endured and parried as was the attack of the mine. We are naturally scared at the advent of an occult enemy of great power; but the secrecy is not favourable to certainty of aim; and it is astonishing to witness how efficaciously skill may be used to neutralise skill even in the handling of infernal machines.

While I am musing on such matters, let me remind or inform my reader of another great invention in war, very formidable to the imagination, and one which no doubt appeared practicable, but which proved a mere scare. "Vertical fire" was the talismanic method by which a clever Frenchman (Carnot, I think) fancied that he could rain iron upon the besieger of a fortress so as to make his trenches untenable, and indeed to annihilate a very large force, if it persisted in keeping within the

range of the missiles. "Let us not," said this ingenious man, "expend our ammunition in hammering away at earthworks; but let us send our bolts in a curve through the air, and let them overwhelm the enemy in his trenches. Let us construct small mortars, so as to make this method general and easy, and let us fire even muskets at an elevation." The design was to aim all the pieces, not directly at the besieger, but into the air above him, so that they might light on him and his works, as shells drop after having been fired from a mortar. The plan was specious, but experience proved it to be not worth following.

I find, on looking back among records of old projects and experiments, that the late Earl of Dundonald had a scheme for destroying an enemy's ship from a distance. His lordship was, as many of the enemies of Great Britain once had good reason to know, an eminently practical man. Therefore, any device which he considered to be well adapted to its purpose ought to have received most careful attention. I am not aware, however, that Lord Dundonald's apparatus and method were ever conclusively tested. They seem rather to have faded out of recollection; and I do not know whether he left behind him any account of his invention. There was also a Captain Warner (I think that was his name) who professed to have discovered the art of smashing up ships at long range, and who was allowed to make some experiments on old

hulks, the result of which rather tended to keep expectation alive. It is to be hoped that he received fair treatment from the officials to whom he submitted his designs; but, whether he did so or not, he also, and his *eureka*, seem to have perished for ever.

The frequent misses, or *quasi* misses, made by our enemies the dynamitards, ought to help in the proof that blowing up is a dubious method of attack. I think we may congratulate ourselves also on the fact that recently two experimenters in the Guy Fawkes line were convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for life. For mine own part I should have been still better pleased if the rascals had been first well whipped and then hanged, which undoubtedly they deserved to be; but let us, the law-abiding part of the public, be thankful for such mercies as the law will deign to give us. It is so solicitous nowadays in studying the interests and tastes of malefactors, that it wellnigh forgets how it was invented for the protection of society!

Here, worthy reader, I will, with your permission, break off my reflections; for when I have got into a moralising vein the chances are (as I know by experience) that I may expatiate ruthlessly, without regard to your patience or my own credit. The didactic humour will not probably last long; and in a moon or two I may be able to set before you musings of a livelier character than those to which I am just now tending. *Au revoir!*

THE LAND QUESTION.

No subject is of greater importance than that which forms the title of our present article. It is a subject upon which men—and especially those who aspire to take part in our future legislation—should have some clear knowledge and definite opinions. And yet there is probably no subject upon which knowledge is so limited, opinions so uncertain, and upon which men's minds at the present moment are in a greater state of confusion. From one end of the country to the other, plausible speeches are delivered to gullible electors, the object of which is to persuade the latter that the candidate who seeks their suffrages is prepared to advocate and support legislation which in some wonderful manner will set right all that has hitherto been wrong in our land laws, and will effect a revolution in the ownership and tenure of land, which will be of incalculable good to the great majority of the people, and, above all, to the newly enfranchised agricultural labourers. The latter, indeed, have had dangled before their eyes the tempting bait of two, three, five, or even ten acres of freehold land apiece, which, forsooth, are to be placed within their reach if the Liberals only succeed in obtaining a majority in the new Parliament. Those who hold out this allurement to the agricultural voter do not, as a rule, condescend to indicate the exact process by means of which this boon is to be conferred. They prefer to avoid all particulars upon this point, for the all-sufficient reason that no process of the kind can possibly take place without a disruption of the laws which reg-

ulate society, and a violation of every principle which has hitherto guided our Legislature. Nor do these specious gentlemen care to tell us how the labourer is to find the capital absolutely necessary for the cultivation of the land; how, in these dark days of agricultural depression, he is to find that remunerative price for his produce for the want of which the farmers have so greatly suffered; or how any large farms are to be held and cultivated, if the labourers are to be taken from them in order to till their own small freeholds or cheap allotments. Such practical points are, of course, beneath the consideration of the candidate, who wisely confines himself to generalities, and only desires that the labourer should receive and take to heart the suggestion that, by some means or other, his worldly position will be improved by the election of a Liberal Parliament.

Our object in the present article is to endeavour to sweep away some of the cobwebs which obscure the land question, so that the value of the vague promises to which we have alluded may be more accurately gauged, and the possibilities and impossibilities of their performance more clearly realised. This, indeed, would hardly be necessary if such promises had been confined to youthful and irresponsible politicians, or had been found only in the inflammatory harangues of those ill-informed agitators whose number has, unfortunately, of late so largely increased, but whom the general good sense of the electorate will know how to appreciate at their right value. Such, however, is by no means the case. Members of

the late Cabinet have not scrupled to lend themselves to the attempt (for it is neither more nor less) to bribe the agricultural labourers in their first exercise of the elective franchise; and it is necessary that, in the best interests of the country, so unworthy an attempt should be detected and exposed. The prime offender in this respect has been Mr Chamberlain, who may be said to have opened the crusade against the present owners of land in Great Britain, in those wild utterances which he delivered at Birmingham and Ipswich last year, whilst he still occupied the responsible position of a Minister of the Crown. It will be remembered that the then President of the Board of Trade expressed at that time two sentiments which, amongst many others, bore away the palm as masterpieces of mischievous ignorance, if indeed they should not be designated by a harsher name. He deliberately laid down the principle that every man was entitled to a share of the land in the country in which he was born; and furthermore stated that "the landlord, the parson, and the farmer" had hitherto been oppressing the labourer, whose position under the newly acquired franchise he likened to that of a sick passenger on board a steamboat, upon whom some one had been lying, but who would "stand it no longer."

From the first of these propositions Mr Chamberlain has somewhat receded in his more recent speeches; but, so far as we are aware, he has never withdrawn or apologised for the second—the apparent object of which was to set class against class in the most wanton manner, and to persuade the agricultural labourers that their interests were directly opposed to those of their employers; and that they had been groaning

under an oppression from which the speaker and his fellows had succeeded in setting them free.

It is not our purpose, however, to dwell upon the incendiary language of Mr Chamberlain, or, indeed, to criticise with any degree of minuteness these first doctrines of his concerning the land question, which in subsequent speeches he has to some extent modified or explained to mean something quite different from the meaning which they assuredly conveyed to men of ordinary intelligence. Our object is rather to point out the vagueness which has hung around the promises which Mr Chamberlain and other Radicals, following in his footsteps, have made to the labourers, and to show how small is the foundation upon which the class in question can really rest their hopes of any such improvement in their position as has been shadowed forth to them from an alteration in our existing land laws. Nothing is more difficult than to bring to book the makers of these wild promises, or to compel them to state in definite terms what is the precise proposal which they make,—by what legislative action they contemplate the establishment of that peasant proprietary which is their apparent object. The labourer, poor fellow, does not trouble his head as to the legislative means by which the desired end is to be reached—it is sufficient for him to know that it is the Liberal party who will enable him to reach it, and this is all that his teachers desire or require him to know. They will be quite content if he votes in November, under the impression that it is their party to whom he will owe the boon which they promise him as the result of their triumph; and they care but little for the possible efforts of his awakening—as awaken he must

after the elections—to a terrible disappointment.

That disappointment to the labourers must inevitably follow, is clear enough to all unprejudiced persons. It is absolutely impossible that any legislation can do that which has been so rashly and mischievously promised. It is untrue to say that anything in our present land laws prevents the establishment of a peasant proprietary to-morrow. No doubt there are measures the adoption of which would increase the amount of land brought into the market, and other measures which would render the purchase and sale of land a matter of less expense than is at present the case. But the creation of a large class of small owners is something quite beyond and apart from the probable or possible operation of any such measures. It is something which, unless effected by the arbitrary interference of the State, and the dangerous employment of the State exchequer to revolutionise the ordinary procedure of daily life, can only be brought about by the quiet operation of natural laws and natural causes, and which, even if attempted by the State in any such violent manner as indicated above, could hardly by any possibility succeed, and would be accompanied by evils so great as to counterbalance any possible advantages to the community. For if it is intended that the State should furnish the labourers with the means of acquiring and cultivating the promised allotments of land, two things are at once painfully clear: first, that the taxpayers of the State must be prepared to submit to an amount of increased taxation to which it is impossible to affix even an approximate limit; and secondly, that a terrible, if not a fatal, blow will have been struck

at the self-reliance and independence of the class for whose supposed benefit the aid of the State is in this manner to be invoked. If, on the other hand, it is not intended that the State should exercise an interference which we must certainly allow to be contrary to all the principles which have hitherto been held vital by the "Liberal" party, no measure which can be passed by Parliament can possibly effect that which has been so wildly promised. For it can hardly be denied that, in order to do so, not only must land be found for the labourer, but means to make use of it when it has come into his possession. A labourer who has means now, and who has also the desire to acquire land, is not prevented from doing so by any existing law. A labourer who has not the means now, or who has not the desire, will not become possessed of either one or the other from the mere fact of a larger amount of land being brought into the market, and the expenses attending its transfer being diminished. The truth is, that the land laws have very little to do with the non-existence of a large class of peasant proprietors. That which prevents the increase of such a class is something of an entirely different character. The low price of agricultural produce, diminishing the demand for agricultural labour, and, according to Mr Chamberlain's own statement, driving labourers by thousands into the towns, "to compete for employment with the dwellers in towns, and thereby diminishing their remuneration"—this it is which has caused the evils which our Radicals love to attribute to land laws created and maintained for the benefit of a bloated aristocracy.

What is the real history of the matter? When it was thought

well to protect the producers of the food of the country, and when farmers were in a tolerably thriving position, the small owner held his own. But this is a tale of the past. The consumers have long since acquired the legislative helm, and guided the course of the ship in their own way and for their own interests. We are not contending that this is wrong, or that the consumers, being the majority of the nation, have not the right to be first considered. But the natural effect of the pursuit of cheap food—laudable as that pursuit may be—has been to diminish the supply of food grown in this country, by reducing the price at which it could be sold at a fair profit to the grower. The same cause has naturally diminished the demand for the labour by and through which that food was produced. And it seems a little hard that men of the Chamberlain school—the school which has identified itself from the first with that system of one-sided free trade under which we live, and to which is largely due our present agricultural depression—should quite overlook this fact, and should come among us seeking to win over to their side the agricultural labourers by attributing every existing evil to entirely different causes, and holding out hopes which, as they well know, can never be realised. It is quite true that, so far as Mr Chamberlain is concerned, he has been so discredited of late by the exposure of the utter ignorance of the first principles of political economy displayed in his speeches, and by the evident shallowness of his views upon “free education,” “graduated” taxation, and other subjects upon which he has lectured the new electorate, that his influence for good or evil cannot but have been sensibly diminished. But

still it must not be forgotten that Mr Chamberlain speaks not merely as the self-sufficient exponent of the doctrines of the Birmingham caucus, but as the colleague of Mr Gladstone; maintained in his position by the latter after his utterance of the revolutionary sentiments at Birmingham and Ipswich already referred to, and regarded as the “coming man” by a large section of Radicals. From this point of view, it is well to show that in his proposed dealings with the land question the ex-President of the Board of Trade is as unpractical and unwise as in his contemplated legislation upon other matters. The “graduated” taxation, which would practically impose upon one class the burden of payment, and invest another with the power of expenditure; and the “free education,” which would enormously increase the already crushing weight of local rates, and destroy the voluntary system, which has done so much for our people,—are not more foolish or more impracticable than the ideas which our modern Solon appears to entertain about land. These ideas, vague and indefinite last year, have been to some extent formulated and put into shape in a speech delivered at Hull upon the 8th of August last. In this speech Mr Chamberlain informed his hearers that “the reform of the land laws” was “the most important of all the reforms” to which he wished to call their attention. And here we also desire to call special attention to this particular reform, with a view to point out the manner in which it is complicated and turned to political account by men of the Chamberlain stamp.

No doubt there exists throughout the country a general belief that a salutary change might be effected in the direction of land

reform. We are not aware that any political party is opposed to such a change; and certainly no such charge can be brought against the constitutional party, since it was Lord Cairns who introduced and carried the greatest measure of land reform which this century has seen. There may, of course, be differences of opinion as to the precise nature and extent of the changes which may still be made with advantage to the community; but as to the direction in which such changes should be made, there is little or no difference of opinion. We would, however, suggest to any one who is honestly desirous of coming to sound conclusions upon this subject, to study, side by side, the speeches of Mr Chamberlain with the programme recently put forth by Mr Arthur Arnold in a letter to Mr Bright, and accepted by the latter with his usual pious invocation of the shade of Cobden as an approving witness of this projected land legislation. Mr Arnold lays down five points, the adoption of which is to lead to that which he calls "the policy of free land." These points are as follows:—

1. Abolition of the law of primogeniture.
2. Abolition of copyhold and customary tenure.
3. Prohibition of settlement of land upon unborn persons, and of the general power of creating life estates in land.
4. Conveyance by registration of title. All interest in the property registered to be recorded.
5. Provision for the sale of encumbered settled property.

These are the only substantive proposals of Mr Arnold, although he supplements them by a suggestion that "the position of the occupier demands fuller security," and that the separation of ownership from occupation of land "is

not in harmony with the general interests of the people."

Now, with regard to these proposals of Mr Arnold, much might be said and written from the point of view of a political economist, and arguments of force and weight might be adduced on one side and on the other. Upon the whole, we are inclined to think that in principle the balance would be in favour of Mr Arnold's programme. If by "the abolition of the law of primogeniture" is intended such an alteration of the law as, in the case of a man dying intestate, would establish the presumption of law in favour of an equal division among the children, instead of giving everything to the eldest son, such an alteration is certainly worthy of consideration. It may be said that if a man desires to "make an eldest son," he can do so by his will; and if he fails to make a will, it is better for the community, and more just to the children, that his intentions should be presumed to have been in favour of leaving to all his offspring the means of support. Such a change, however, should not be made without a careful examination of the manner in which it has operated in other countries, and it is one which has very little to do with "peasant proprietary." The abolition of copyhold and customary tenure (with a due saving of existing interests), would be a distinct benefit to the community. The question of settlement and entail is more debatable; because if you forbid a man to create a life estate in land—*i.e.*, to leave his land to an individual who shall not be able to alienate it—you take away an incentive to thrift, and encourage an owner to spend the income of his estate upon himself, instead of improving it for a successor, who, for aught he know, may part with it the next day. As a general

rule, it is better for a community to encourage habits of thrift and saving, and discourage those of reckless expenditure, and this restriction of a man's power to deal with his property will have an effect precisely the reverse. Still, there is much to be said in favour of giving to every generation a control over the soil; and it may be argued that in this matter the spirit of the age requires that the alteration should be made, and that where estates have been well managed, and the owner duly discharges his duties, and is wise enough to live within his income, the land may still pass from father to son, generation after generation, without the assistance of a law which has been condemned, wisely or unwisely, by public opinion. As to the conveyance of land by registration of title, and provision for the sale of encumbered settled estates, experience has not yet shown us the sufficiency or insufficiency of Lord Cairns's Act upon the latter point; whilst upon the former, every one will be agreed that to facilitate and cheapen the conveyance of land from one person to another is a desirable object, and one which, based upon a carefully considered and well-regulated system, can hardly be otherwise than of general advantage.

But now, as practical men, let us ask ourselves one important question. Here, it is true, are considerable land reforms sketched out to us, and valid reasons shown for their adoption in the spirit, if not in every detail of the proposed programme. But how do these schemes bring to the agricultural labourer his promised allotment, or in any conceivable manner improve his position? What difference will it make to the labourer whether A B leaves his land to his eldest son, or whether it is sold after his death

in order to divide the proceeds among his four or five children? How will it affect the labourer if the heir to a hundred or a thousand acres has the power of selling his land, instead of being precluded by the fact of only possessing a life-tenancy in the property? What will the adoption of any one of Mr Arnold's proposals do towards the realisation of the promises made to the labourer by Liberal candidates and their emissaries? The answer can be but one—nothing. The Radical programme of Land Reform, as announced by Mr Arnold, positively does not touch the question of the agricultural labourer, nor bring him one inch nearer the possession of land. This is so well understood by Mr Chamberlain, and he is so fearful that the labourers will compare his vague oratorical claptrap with the practical proposals of Mr Arnold, that he has felt obliged to go somewhat further, and, in the Hull speech, to which allusion has been already made, to make some further suggestions with the view of showing that something may still be grafted upon the Land Law Reform programme which may induce the labourer to think it worth his while to support it.

"Mr Arnold's proposal," says Mr Chamberlain, "would do something. It would tend, no doubt, to the dispersion of great estates. It would bring more landed property into the market, but *I do not think it would do much for the labourers of Wiltshire or for the crofters of the Highlands of Scotland. We must go further if we want to go to the root of the matter.*" And then Mr Chamberlain, after suggesting to the farmers that they should require the provisions of the Irish Land Act to be applied to themselves, and indulging in a sneer at them for having hitherto been too honest to do any such

thing, proceeds to say that "when we come to the labourers the task is easier. They know what they want. They want that facilities should be afforded them for having decent cottages and fair allotments at reasonable rents, and with security of tenure." And then Mr Chamberlain, evidently speaking in abject and inexcusable ignorance of the truth, goes on to declare that "many great landlords have driven the labourers off their properties, and have pulled down their cottages, partly in order to escape responsibilities in connection with them, partly in order to throw the land into immense farms, and partly for other reasons;" and suggests that "these landlords" should be compelled "to repair the wrong they have done," and that some "local authority" "*should enforce upon them the duty of providing in every case a sufficient number of decent cottages with land attached to them for all the men who are required for the cultivation of their estate.*" If the landlord should fail to perform this duty, the local authority is to "acquire land" for the purpose; and when it does so, says Mr Chamberlain, "*it should not be called upon to pay an unnatural or extravagant price; it should be able to obtain it at the fair market value—a value which a willing purchaser would pay to a willing seller in the open market without any condition for compulsory sale.*"

If Mr Chamberlain had condescended to make himself acquainted with the facts relating to a question upon which he speaks so glibly, and with such reprehensible ignorance, he would have discovered that in the vast majority of cases throughout England it is precisely the "great landlords" upon whose estates the condition of the labourers, as to cottages and land attached to cottages, is

by far the best; and that it is the small owners, the speculative builders, and the "middle" men who will almost invariably be found to be the proprietors of the cottages of which complaints can justly be made. An inquiry into facts, however, is quite beneath Mr Chamberlain. His object apparently is to excite the feelings of the labourers against the "great landlords," with a view to the coming elections; and facts must not be allowed to stand in the way of so laudable an intention. This great apostle of free trade and free competition deliberately counsels the confiscation of property by a local authority, who, we suppose, are themselves to be the judges as to what property they will take, how many labourers "are required for the cultivation" of any particular estate, and what is the price which they shall give for the land they fix upon as most suitable for their purpose. If this is not Mr Chamberlain's meaning, what is it? "A willing seller" in open market expects—and fairly expects—to receive from "a willing purchaser" whatever value the free and fair competition between "willing purchasers" fixes as the reasonable price for his land. This, however, is not at all Mr Chamberlain's idea. "Free competition" (once a Liberal watchword) would not do. The "local authority," or perhaps the county court judge, or at all events some one who will not give the landlord the price which free competition would give him, is to fix the price; and this is to be the solution of all the difficulties of "the land question," so far as the labourers are concerned!

Of course all this farrago of nonsense is prefaced by the claptrap about the rights which the community formerly had in the land—how that "the soil of every country

originally belonged to its inhabitants," and that "if it has been thought *expedient to create a private ownership in place of common rights, at least that private ownership must be deemed a trust, and be subject to the conditions of a trust.*" If these words mean anything at all, and are not merely intended to tickle the ears of the ignorant voters at the coming elections, they point at a deliberate infringement of that private ownership which Mr Chamberlain informs us has replaced "common rights." It cannot be too often or too strongly insisted on that the operation which Mr Chamberlain describes as the "creation of private ownership" is simply the natural development of civilisation, without which no individual would expend his money or labour upon the land, and to destroy which in the case of such a nation as our own would be a process fraught with the most mischievous consequences to the community.

Of course in one sense all property is held as "a trust" by its owners; but to apply this doctrine in the manner which Mr Chamberlain appears to contemplate, would be to strike a blow at the security of all kinds of property, and directly to discourage, in poor as well as rich men, that habit of thrift which requires as a natural law that its results should be secured to itself. If the property of "great landlords" is no longer to be secure, and some "authority" or other, independent of the owner, is to judge of the manner in which he has performed his duty towards his labourers, and what may be the proper number required for the cultivation of his estate, how can the small owners of cottage property be allowed to escape similar supervision? There is a good and wholesome old proverb to the effect that "what is sauce for the goose

is sauce for the gander;" and if this rough-and-ready interference with the private ownership of land is to be inaugurated, it will not be long before other classes of property will infallibly be subjected to the same discipline. "Land," says Mr Chamberlain, "was not made for rent alone." Rent is, after all, only the interest of money invested in land; and we might exactly as well say that the capital which Mr Chamberlain himself possesses, in whatever form it may happen to be invested, was not made for the interest it pays him alone. If I invest £1000 in land, and am lucky enough to get 3 per cent for it, why should Mr Chamberlain's £1000, which he has chosen to invest in some security which returns him 5 or 6 per cent, be less liable to contribute to the benefit of his fellow-countrymen—agricultural labourers or others—than mine? Once invade the rights of private ownership, and you cannot reasonably or logically stop at any particular kind of property, neither can you deal only—in the way of confiscation—with that which belongs to "great" owners. The poor man is to the full as much interested as the rich in maintaining that security of private property which protects his savings as well as the wealth of his richer neighbour, and the invasion of which would be nothing less than a national misfortune.

But supposing that Mr Chamberlain is to have his way, it will be curious to consider the manner in which the local authority is to be chosen to which it is proposed to intrust such powers of interference with other people's property. It will be still more curious to observe the working of a scheme so utterly foreign to English habits and the English nation; and most curious of all will it be if such an experi-

ment should be even temporarily successful, and this for reasons sufficiently obvious to those who care to give the matter serious consideration. If the holding of small allotments by labourers, whether as freeholds or at a low rent, is a paying concern, there will be plenty of such holdings without any of Mr Chamberlain's new-fangled and ill-considered legislation. But we must make certain whether it is intended to confer freeholds upon the labourers by these proposals, or only to secure that allotments should be let to them at fair prices, along with "decent cottages." We may be wronging Mr Chamberlain in believing that he intended the former, which would, of course, be nothing short of confiscation, weakly defended by the jargon about "common rights" and "private ownership." If, however, it is only his intention that his "local authority" should benevolently interfere with a landowner's management of his own property, in order to secure that the cottages upon that property shall be sufficiently "decent," and that an allotment of land should be let with each of them, another question is at once suggested.

If this system were one which would pay, would it not be everywhere adopted, without the interference of any local authority? If, on the other hand, it is *not* so adopted, may it not be that experience has shown that it would *not* pay? and in that case where would be the wisdom and justice of enforcing it? The truth is, that the question of labourers' allotments is one which is by no means to be easily or hastily decided. A labourer should always have a good garden to his cottage, and wise landlords will take care that such is the case. But the moment you give to him more land than he wants for garden purposes, it becomes an exceedingly doubtful matter whether you are

conferring upon him a benefit or the reverse. Allusion has been made to the system upon Lord Tollemache's estate, which Mr Chamberlain extols as being in contrast with that which exists upon other properties. Is he aware that every person who has an allotment upon Lord Tollemache's estate must have some other trade besides that of a mere labourer upon the soil? It is an excellent plan, beyond doubt, that the village tailor, blacksmith, grocer, farrier, &c., should each have a plot of land in addition to his trade; but the number of these traders in an ordinary village is soon exhausted, and their occupation of land is something quite distinct from and apart from the question of giving allotments to the agricultural labourers as a class. In a vast number of instances, these men are far better off at their present wages, when working on a farm, and having only their cottage and garden. Be it observed, moreover, that we are not alluding to the labourer who, by thrift and economy, has saved the means to elevate himself above the position he has hitherto occupied. Such a man may buy—or more probably hire—five, ten, or twenty acres of land, and by prudence and care may do well, although at present prices the experiment is doubtful at best.

The distinction between the two classes of men cannot be too clearly borne in mind. The small holder just described must devote his whole time and labour to his own holding. Without this condition, success is impossible under existing circumstances. The agricultural labourer, on the other hand, receiving wages for his labour upon the land occupied by the farmer, owes to his master a "fair day's labour for a fair day's wages," and has therefore only the surplus labour of each day to be-

stow upon his own garden or allotment. The moment you give to such a man a larger quantity of land than that for the cultivation of which his surplus labour will suffice, you tempt him either to neglect his master's work and risk the loss of his employment, or to employ other labour upon his own land, the payment for which he can ill afford. The almost certain result will be to embarrass the man whom you desired to benefit, and to place him in an entirely false position. A freehold allotment to such a man would, in the vast majority of cases, be an evil instead of a good; he could not get out of it sufficient to maintain his family; he would speedily be tempted to borrow money upon the security of his freehold; and if the experiment should be tried upon any large scale, the existing class of thriving labourers, upon whom the burden of rates and taxes does not fall, would be replaced by a class of pauperised freeholders — freeholders, indeed, only in name, since their land would be mortgaged and their finances crippled by the sure and certain operation of natural causes. We repeat that we are not alluding to the small holders who occupy a position above that of the genuine agricultural labourer, but this is an altogether different class of man from those to whom Mr Chamberlain and his allies make their wild promises. There are hundreds and thousands of "small tenants" — *i. e.*, tenants holding from five to five-and-twenty acres of land — scattered over England at this moment. They are a valuable class of men; and it is to be hoped that, as rate-payers, they may yet escape the crushing addition to local rates which would be imposed upon them if Mr Chamberlain's vagaries should ever be embodied in legis-

lation. Nothing is more common than for Radical orators to point to these men in the localities in which they exist, and found upon their existence an appeal to the new electorate to support candidates who will place the great mass of agricultural labourers in the same happy position.

But this is what no candidate can do — no legislation effect. If this class is to increase, it must be by the operation of natural causes; and to attempt to increase it by a rude interference with property, and a violation of the first principles of political economy, would not only be a useless but dangerous experiment. Inasmuch, however, as the increase of the number of owners of land is in itself a thing highly conservative in the best sense of the word, anything which would, by a fair and reasonable process, tend to such a result, would certainly be entitled to our support. There can, therefore, be no objection to an addition which Mr Arthur Arnold has added to his programme, and which has been adopted by the "Free Land League," of which he has just been announced as the first president. This addition is to the effect that the League will "promote the acquirement of land by the people for residence and cultivation, both by general laws and by the instrumentality of municipalities and other corporate bodies." Any "general law" which, without robbery or injustice, can bring land within more easy reach of the people, will be a law to which, as Conservatives, we should certainly raise no objections. The action, moreover, "of municipalities and other corporate bodies," judiciously exerted, may be welcomed; and beyond this, the encouragement and development of the principle of co-operation may do still more towards the desired object of increasing the

number of the people who shall become the owners of land. By the side of all this must be industry, thrift, and prudence on the part of the people themselves; and any system or project which tends to encourage and assist such qualities cannot fail to be of distinct advantage to the community.

But what has all this to do with the promises of Mr Chamberlain and the Radical candidates to the agricultural labourers? Nothing, and less than nothing. It would indeed have been good advice, if these gentlemen had pointed out to the labourers how that the exercise of the qualities enumerated above is the only method by which any man can improve his social position, and that such exercise rarely fails in achieving the desired result. It would have been good advice, too, to point out how that the interests of all classes are interwoven together; that in this world there must of necessity be inequalities of rank and wealth, equally as of health and strength; and that the surest road to happiness—both to the agricultural labourers and to every other class—is to do, earnestly and honestly, the work which lies before us. This, however, in the opinion of our Radical teachers, would have been advice too tame and tasteless for the palate of the new electorate. Envy, discontent, the setting of class against class—these are the teachings, as usual, discernible in the Radical crusade; and as a fitting corollary to such lessons comes the bribe of gain, in the hope of which the agricultural labourer is to be asked to vote. We have endeavoured to show that this gain is illusory, visionary, and in no sort of way likely to be realised. It is to be hoped that this fact will be impressed, far and wide, upon those whom it more directly concerns. The agricultural

labourer has nothing to expect from the land legislation of one political party more than from that of the other; and he will indeed be unwise, if, deceived by false promises, he distrusts those amongst whom he has lived all his life, and casts his vote at the dictation of those who would persuade him that his position will be improved by the revolutionary changes which they suggest. Changes, indeed, there may and must be in the progress of time, and some of these will affect the ownership and occupation of land, both as to the quantity of land held by individuals and the condition of its tenure. But the interest of the agricultural labourer, beyond that of any other class, is that the owners and occupiers of land should be quiet, secure, and prosperous, because it is under such conditions that his employment is steady and continuous, and his wages assured. No man can be a worse friend to the agricultural labourer than he who teaches him to envy and covet the possessions of other men, instead of following his calling with diligence and perseverance, and trusting for the improvement of his condition to those habits of prudence, industry, and forethought which are his surest and safest friends. It is cruel to endeavour for political purposes to drag these poor men into a revolutionary crusade against the land laws of their country; and those who do so will either miserably fail, or in the hour of their success will find that such a crusade may be difficult to repress within the limits to which they would have wished to confine it; and may involve things nearer and nearer to themselves than land, in a ruin inevitably consequent upon the destruction of the principle of "private ownership."

WHAT ABOUT IRELAND?

A POSITION more embarrassing than that into which Lord Salisbury and his colleagues find themselves thrown it would be impossible to imagine. All the old landmarks by which British statesmen were accustomed formerly to steer their course have been removed; all the old questions which used in other days to exercise their ingenuity are swept aside. Of the House of Commons itself, in which these questions used to be debated, we have seen the last; and by what manner of assembly it is to be succeeded, who can tell? All that we know for certain on that subject is, that a succession of parliamentary reformers have so tinkered the constituency, that to speak of it as corresponding in any degree with what it once was is to belie the truth. And just as affairs have arrived at this point—just as the creation of two millions of new voters, and the breaking up in county and borough alike of old political associations bring us face to face with a future through which the most clear-sighted of mortals cannot pretend to look, the men to whose exertions the country is indebted for these changes desert their post, and leave to others the unenviable task of beginning what must necessarily be a new page in English history.

It is impossible to think of all this, and to contemplate at the same time the tangled web into which our foreign relations have been woven, without a feeling of mixed indignation and alarm. Of indignation, that a trick so palpably mean as that which enabled Mr Gladstone to escape an impending Nemesis, should have succeeded;

of alarm, lest the best efforts of the new Government should not avail to preserve what still remains to us of the ancient institutions of the country. Let us not, however, be misunderstood. The flight from power of the late Administration was on their parts dastardly in the extreme, and to those on whom it threw the responsibility of office, very inconvenient. Yet on the whole we are far from regretting the coincidence. One consequence of the manœuvre will probably be the effacement of the Whigs as a separate party in the State. Individuals among them may fail to perceive whither interest and duty alike point the way; but as a body we may expect to see them follow the lead of such men as the Duke of Argyll, Mr Goschen, and Mr Forster. In this case, the hostile lines arrayed against each other, first at the hustings, and by-and-by in the House of Commons, will be moderate Conservatives on the one side and avowed revolutionists on the other; while the issue of the contest will depend not more upon the ground taken at the outset by her Majesty's advisers, than upon the extent to which constitutionalists of all shades of opinion are prepared to give them their confidence. For if the present Government be not trusted to an extent never before required by party leaders of their followers, then farewell to England's greatness. The last chance of escape from the rapids will be taken away, and nothing left for us to do except to close our eyes and shoot Niagara.

There is now lying before us a little volume wherein are recorded,

in what is meant to be a spirit of commendable fairness, the main arguments which bear *pro* and *con* upon the 'Political Questions of the Day.' Mr Buxton has, in our opinion, made a good deal more of some of these questions than they deserve. Elementary education, for example, as he deals with it, is little better than the crotchet of a handful of specialists. Proportional representation is dead and buried, and women's suffrage can scarcely be said to be ripe as yet for discussion. About reform in the proceedings of the House of Commons likewise, there is a growing consensus of opinion among reasonable men; and though the Lords have been pretty well abused of late, and the Bishops in particular warned to put their house in order, the hold of that assembly upon the respect and confidence of the country is as strong as ever it was, and will not be weakened by whatever changes in their mode of procedure their lordships may consider it desirable to adopt. The same thing may be said, perhaps a little more strongly, concerning capital punishment, marriage with a deceased wife's sister, Sunday opening of museums, and cremation. These can scarcely be regarded as political questions at all. But one question there certainly is, the paramount importance of which cannot be disputed, and to this we propose in the following pages to confine our own and the reader's attention.

When Mr Buxton corrected the last proof-sheet of his ingenious little volume, the meaning of the term Home Rule was hidden by those who clamoured for it under a heap of generalities. That it pointed towards the re-establishment in some shape or another of an Irish Parliament in College Green, nobody was allowed to doubt.

But of the constitution of the coming legislative body and the limits to which its authority was to extend, so little was said that neither they who approved, nor they who objected to the arrangement, looked elsewhere for a model on which to work out their scheme than the Parliament of which Plunket and Grattan were the ornaments. Accordingly Mr Buxton, as counsel for the Home-Rulers, contends, "that the old Irish Parliament, though returned by a corrupt and limited electorate, did a vast amount of useful work; that a successor constructed on better lines and sounder principles would be eminently efficient; and that, forasmuch as the limits and extent of the powers of the Irish Parliament would be strictly defined, there could be no danger of their being overstepped, and there need be no collision with the Imperial Parliament." In like manner, when pleading on the other side, Mr Buxton says: "Thus the principle of a federal system, for which the Home-Rulers plead, cannot be discussed without reference to its details, and the Home-Rulers themselves are unable to agree on any one scheme, or to lay down the limits of the power of the Irish Parliament." Again: "Either the Imperial Parliament would overshadow the Irish Parliament, and make it of little account, or constant conflicts would arise between the two rival bodies." And finally: "The Irish have never yet shown themselves capable of self-government, as witness the former Irish Parliament." Now these are points which might have been argued out with some show of justice on both sides had they been brought under the notice of the Legislature and the country six months ago. But they are

quite out of place now. Mr Parnell and his lieutenants have made a clean breast of it, and Home Rule comes before us in the garb of a democracy in Ireland, pure and simple, to be legislated for by a single Chamber, representing the manhood of the country, and governed by an executive,—how to be created we are not fully informed.

We should but waste our own and our readers' time were we to write a single sentence in confutation of a device so puerile. All that is necessary to say about it the newspapers have said already. The proposition is simply monstrous, the thing proposed cannot be done, and Home Rule, overlaid by the extravagance of its advocates, passes for ever beyond the limits of practical politics. So much the better for her Majesty's present advisers, to whom it leaves open a fair field on which to examine the Irish question all round—in other words, to look fairly in the face the causes which may have contributed to make Ireland what she is, and by a judicious change of system, where change seems desirable, to bring about, if it be possible still to do so, a happier state of things. That the task we have set them is no easy one, neither Lord Salisbury nor Sir Michael Hicks-Beach can be more painfully convinced than ourselves. Undertaken, however, it must be; and if among the suggestions we are about to offer, some shall appear to verge on the indelicate, we must plead in vindication of the proceeding that where the best interests of the commonwealth are likely to be promoted by it, there is no living individual or corporate body, high or low, rich or poor, so ready to sacrifice personal convenience and long-cherished predilections as the gra-

cious Lady whom we all look up to as the mother of her country.

The question has often been asked, and was never more in men's mouths than at present, Why is Scotland without Home Rule contented and thriving, while Ireland is and always has been in a state of chronic hostility to the law? Both had their national Parliaments once, and both were prevailed upon to merge them in one united Parliament. Both were at first dissatisfied with the arrangement, and plotted and intrigued to get rid of it. But while Scotland came in time to perceive that by becoming one with her powerful neighbour she had gained more than she lost by the surrender of her separate nationality, all the means hitherto tried to impress the Irish mind with a similar conviction have been tried in vain. Mr Parnell, we perceive, accounts for the circumstance in some degree by saying that whatever promises to affect in any way the Scottish people is settled by Scottish members; whereas Ireland is not allowed to do anything for herself, but must accept, in her social as well as in her political life, whatever a despotic English Government may consider best for her. We are far from denying that there is a good deal of truth in this statement, though it is far from accounting for a state of things of which it is rather the outcome than the operating cause. To discover that, if we be in earnest in seeking for it, we must go considerably further back in history.

The first marked difference in the relations of England towards Scotland and Ireland is this: Ireland became subject to the English Crown by right of conquest; Scotland, because of the succession of a Scottish

king to the English throne. Had the conquest of Ireland been completed once for all, and the vanquished treated by the victors as would be the case now, this distinction could have had little, if any, lasting effect on the feelings of the races one towards the other. Wales, like Ireland, became a province of England by right of conquest, yet Wales has cheerfully adopted the laws and institutions of England; and had the Church of the eighteenth century done its duty, the Principality would have been in every respect as content with the English constitution as Kent or Hampshire. Why is this? Because neither Edward I. nor any of his successors made war on the religion of the Welsh, nor confiscated their estates in order to enrich his favourites. Hence the Welsh chiefs and priests, though discontented for a time, and often marauding on English soil, learned better manners as civilisation made progress among them, and became peaceable subjects of the English Crown, long before the Scottish Highlanders had ceased to make forays, or exact black-mail from their Lowland neighbours.

Look now to Ireland, and mark what befell there. The conquest of Ireland was not a royal enterprise, begun and carried on to a successful issue. It was the intermittent work of a succession of adventurers, who, finding the island inhabited by a variety of barbarous tribes, struck now at one, now at another, without any higher object in view than to dispossess the chiefs of their lands, and reduce the people to bondage. This was quite as much the case after as before the King of England asserted the rights of sovereignty which the Pope had conferred upon him. His representatives made no

attempt whatever to consolidate their conquests, by establishing a reign of law, even in the fragments of the country which they subdued, but acted like the adventurers who preceded them — deposed the chiefs of clans, seized their property, and forced the wretched clansmen to seek safety for life in the bogs and mountains. We have not a word to say in defence of the process by which the conquest of Ireland was carried on. The conquered people were not recompensed for the loss of independence by the spread of civilisation among them. On the contrary, not a few of the earlier settlers adopted the manners and customs of the Irish, and became both a thorn in the side of the English Government, and in their dealings with their neighbours as treacherous and cruel as the most cruel and treacherous of the chiefs whom they had expelled.

There is a legend which tells that, among other outrages committed by the early conquerors on the conquered, the setting up of the Pope's authority over the primitive Irish Church is to be numbered. The legend may be or may not be a myth; but of this there can be no doubt, that when, in process of time, resistance to English conquest had been overcome, England did her best to force upon Ireland a religion which Ireland obstinately refused to accept. When Henry VIII. quarrelled with the Pope, and became himself head of the Church in England, it was thought necessary to extend the blessing of the Reformation to Ireland. There were none among the Irish indigenous bishops and clergy on whom the examples of Secker and his brethren produced any effect; and they were in consequence set aside and their places taken by

more complaisant ecclesiastics. Curiously enough, no care was taken to fill up sees and benefices as they became vacant with gentlemen prepared to devote all their energies to the enlightenment of a superstitious people. The new bishops, the new rectors, on the contrary, could neither speak nor understand the language of the country, and were therefore as little capable as indeed they were disposed to take any trouble with their benighted flocks. Hence these people clung to their deposed pastors; and in outhouses or in the open air (chapels humble enough came later) gathered together to hear Mass, while the sole occupants of the church were the rector and his family.

We come now to the period of the great civil war, with the Cromwellian invasion and all its consequences. It is a reminiscence on which no true-hearted Irishman, whatever his political principles may be, can look back except with indignation. The Irish were not rebels, yet they suffered the extreme punishment of rebellion—in fields laid waste, towns taken by storm, and entire garrisons put to the sword.

Nor are we better placed, when standing, so to speak, beside William of Orange, for once in his life a victor, on the banks of the Boyne. With his reign began that era of persecution, which rendered the Catholic incapable of serving the Crown in any capacity, military or civil—which disqualified him for sitting in Parliament, or so much as voting for a member to represent him, and enabled the son of a Catholic, by the easy process of professing the Protestant belief, to rob his father of his property. And all this while Ireland had her own Parliament, of which Mr Bux-

ton, speaking as the advocate of Home Rule, says, "that, though returned by a corrupt and limited electorate, it did a vast amount of useful work."

Of the useful work done by the old Irish Parliament, few traces remain. Its members jobbed to an extent which has long ceased to be possible; and with a view to their selfish interests, gave the franchise to a host of Catholic peasants, while keeping its own doors closed against Catholic gentlemen. Of its independence of the English Parliament on all except imperial subjects, the less said the better. There was a time, prior to the Union, when Ireland gave some promise of becoming more than a purely agricultural country. Industries of various kinds took root and threatened to flourish, whereupon the manufacturers of Lancashire and Yorkshire complained to the English Government of the injury done thereby to their trade; and by an Act of the Imperial Parliament the Irish industries were suppressed.

But why go on with a list of grievances which we have not hesitated to paint in their darkest colours, without pausing to tell how often, and with what ferocity, attempts were made to exact revenge? Enough is done when we state that the climax of evil was reached, when first the American war, and then the war of the French Revolution, caused the spirit of rebellion which had long been seething to boil over, and satisfied the Minister of the day that nothing short of the absorption of the Irish into the British Parliament could put an end to a state of things which had become intolerable.

Had Pitt been allowed to carry

his own plans into execution, there is good reason to conclude that Ireland might have been long ere this a law-abiding portion of the United Kingdom. There had been a move in the Irish Parliament itself to repeal the law which closed the doors of both Houses against Catholic peers and commoners. The passing of an Act to this effect in the united Parliament would have earned the everlasting gratitude of all classes of Irishmen, except, perhaps, some of the ultra-Protestants of the north. As to the priests, they had by 1800 been pretty well cured of their leaning towards France; and were very poor, in consequence of either the inability or the disinclination of the laity to be punctual in the payment of their dues. The prospect of a State endowment which was held out to them—unofficially no doubt, yet in quarters which they had reason to believe to be trustworthy—was most acceptable. Had it been realised, we know for certain that whatever influence they possessed would have been used in the cause of order. It was not realised, and they became apostles of disloyalty. We may regret but cannot be surprised at the circumstance; because, apart from the natural feeling of disgust at finding themselves deceived, their dependence for existence on their flocks made them powerless to lead in other directions than might be in accord with the views of their paymasters. Our honest belief is, that even now a majority of the Catholic bishops and priests of Ireland would oppose the National movement if they dared. It is certain that eighty-five years ago an opportunity of enlisting them on the side of good government was thrown away, such as can never occur again.

From the date of the Union up to the present hour the condition of Ireland has gone on from bad to worse. Stern laws, sternly executed, made open rebellion difficult; but a network of secret associations overspread the land, from the machinations of which neither life nor property could be safeguarded. Curiously enough, the first decided attack on property came, not from the Catholic peasantry, but from the Protestant landlords. These gentlemen carried a Bill through their own Parliament which deprived the Protestant clergy of their right to the tithe of agistment; and their tenants not unnaturally came by-and-by to the conclusion that they had just as good a right as their betters to rob the parson. Thence the Tithe campaign, as it was called, with all the deplorable memories connected with it, and ending in a still larger deduction from the incomes of the clergy. Meanwhile, no longer as suitors, but like men determined by violence, if need were, to carry their point, monster meetings, with the great demagogue of the day as their leader, demanded the repeal of what remained of the penal laws. Need we pursue the subject further. Neither the surrender, for such it was, on the Catholic question, nor the absolute relief of the peasantry from the payment of tithes, nor the removal of all restrictions on Irish trade, nor the substitution of a permanent grant to Maynooth in place of the sum annually voted, nor the establishment of Queen's Colleges,—neither these nor any other remedial measures which the Government proposed and Parliament voted, were of the smallest avail. Ireland refused to be won over to respect for law, except by Arms Acts and suchlike measures, which ensured

something like order as long as they continued in force, but the lapse or repeal of which led to an immediate renewal of disturbance.

If no good came of the old policy of repression, still more disastrous have been the results of recent attempts at conciliation. The disestablishment and disendowment of the Protestant Church in Ireland was at once constitutionally iniquitous and politically foolish. If Mr Gladstone had been bold enough to follow the example set him two centuries ago, he might have indeed become the pacificator of Ireland. But Mr Gladstone knew that Protestant England and Scotland would never tolerate the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland; and, professing to work on the model which William III. had set, he did in Ireland what was not done in Scotland, and the attempt to do which would have set Scotland in a blaze. Mark the consequence. Scotland, conciliated by the substitution of a Presbyterian for an Episcopal Established Church, remains to this day a contented integral portion of the United Kingdom; while Ireland demands, in fiercer accents than at any former period, to be set free from a connection which is odious to her.

The sole effect on Ireland of the disestablishment of the Protestant Church was to aggravate the evil it was intended to mitigate. In England and Scotland it has given fresh impulse to a conspiracy which will never rest till, through sheer weariness, some future Parliament shall allow a Bill to pass of which it cordially disapproves. Meanwhile other consequences have followed, of which Mr Gladstone was well warned at the time, and warned in vain. The land question, not the Church, was

the upas-tree that overshadowed Ireland; and with the land he was soon constrained to meddle. With what effect? Let the rise and progress of the Land League, with its houghings, its boycottings, and its murders, answer the question, when at last this great pacificator of Ireland is forced to ask Parliament for such powers of coercion as were never before in a constitutional country intrusted by the Legislature to the executive. Verily the system on which Ireland has heretofore been governed proves to be an utter failure. "Force," Mr Bright tells us, "is no remedy." Force, interspersed with measures of conciliation which violate every law of moral right, seems to be even less of a remedy. In what direction are we to turn now with any hope that by moving steadily in it we may reach the end desired by all political parties—a real, not a merely nominal, fusion of England and Ireland into one nation?

There cannot be two opinions as to the wisdom of the first step taken in this direction by the present Government. Whether it would have been possible for them to act otherwise than they did, is a question not worth asking. Their determination to trust to the common law for the preservation of order has already, under the Earl of Carnarvon's Lord-Lieutenancy, proved to have been a wise political act, of the ultimate success of which we may justly entertain good expectations. Partial outrages may occur, and are occurring, in districts notoriously disaffected, and agitators may continue for a while to shout treason in Dublin and elsewhere; but a firm though temperate enforcement of the law's requirements will put a gradual stop to the former of these

evils, and unless the leaders of all sections of the two great parties belie in Parliament the declarations they have made to their constituents, means will soon be found for rendering the latter too dangerous a game to be attempted. Questions of local self-government, of land laws, and so forth, may, and probably will when brought forward, call forth the expression of opinions widely divergent. But in the determination that Ireland shall not become an independent nation, all except the Parnellite faction are agreed. Now there is but one mode of rendering this agreement effective, and that is by passing an Act which shall make the attempt to bring about a disruption in the United Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland an act of treason or treason-felony. And the sooner the procedure of the House of Commons has been so reformed as to render the passing of such an Act easy, the sooner will Parliament be able to decide by which of the two great parties—the Conservative or the Radical—is the government of the British empire henceforth to be carried on.

Having settled this point, her Majesty's Ministers will of course proceed to unfold their views on all the subjects with which they propose to deal. Among these, legislation for Ireland will not be forgotten. But legislation for Ireland will, under so marked a change of circumstances, cease to have anything peculiar about it: it will run on the same lines with legislation for England. One exception, and only one, must indeed be made to this general rule. The Lord-Lieutenancy, with its sham Court, and the administrative staff of Dublin Castle, is a mischievous anachronism: it keeps alive, were

it only because of the colour of the State liveries, some vague idea among the vulgar of a nationality which never existed, while at the same time it reduces in reality the status of Ireland to that of a Crown colony. Canada is self-governing, because it has its Colonial Parliament as well as its Governor-General. So are the Australasian colonies and the Cape of Good Hope. But Ireland has no Parliament except the Imperial Parliament, and is therefore, so far as the executive is concerned, in the same condition as Jamaica and Natal. Indeed it comes behind them both, because both Jamaica and Natal have Councils, without the consent of which the Governor cannot act; whilst Ireland is under the personal control of the Lord Lieutenant and his subordinates.

With the abolition of the office of Lord Lieutenant, and the handing over of Irish business to a Secretary of State, all specialities affecting the condition of the Irish people ought, in our opinion, to cease. Thus Ireland will be placed upon exactly the same footing as Scotland, with its new Secretary of State, stands upon, and a probable ground of complaint of partial treatment with respect to the latter country will be anticipated. In all other respects, treat Ireland as you treat Yorkshire or Kent. Are county boards to be set up in England for the management of county affairs? Give them to Ireland also, endowed with the same authority, and risk the consequences. Is it necessary, for any reason, or at any time, to intrust the Crown with exceptional powers for the preservation of peace and order? Make the law which confers these powers applicable to all parts of the United Kingdom alike, and take

care to guard against their abuse by requiring that before acting upon them in any district, the disturbed district shall be proclaimed, and, if Parliament be sitting, the Minister be required to state in full the reasons which led to the proceeding. In a word, do all that by legislation can be done, to make the Irish understand that they are one people with the English and the Scotch, subject like them to laws which are strong enough to protect the peaceful majority against a tyrannous minority, and not less free to seek by peaceful and constitutional means the redress of any grievances, real or imaginary, under which they believe themselves to labour.

These are, in our opinion, political arrangements so obviously expedient, that to press their adoption by argument on the notice of the Government and the Legislature would be pure surplusage. Let us not, however, hesitate to confess our belief that unless they be accompanied by something else which shall appeal to the personal sympathies of the Irish people, they are just as likely to fail as to succeed in securing the desired end. The Irish people—we do not mean the shopkeeping class, much less the journalistic and other noisy cliques, who make capital for themselves out of the sufferings of others, but the great bulk of the nation—are at once an imaginative and a warm-hearted people. They neither understand half that is said to them by the demagogues who prate about Home Rule and national independence—nor, if they did, would they stir a finger to get them realised. There is not in Europe a people so little inclined to a democracy in any shape as they. In spite of all that has been done to sow dissension between classes,

the Irish peasantry and farmers as a whole still look up to “them of the coud stock” with affection and respect. It was with jobbers in land, with men who had purchased properties under the Encumbered Estates Act, that their quarrel originally lay; and had the late Government acted with common prudence and vigour, it never would have gone farther. Still, in spite of the extent to which, under Government patronage, hostility to landlordism has been carried—in spite of the cheers with which, at public meetings, abuse of England and everything English is greeted,—we are as certain as we can be of anything not demonstrable like a proposition in Euclid, that there is behind all this in the Irish heart a spark of loyalty to the Crown, ay, and to the constitution, which it is quite within the reach of the Crown and her Majesty’s present advisers, by judicious management, to blow up into a flame. Let us explain ourselves, apologising at the same time for any expression which may appear unbecoming in a quarter where least of all we could intend, much less desire, to give pain.

It is a historical fact, that though Ireland has been linked to England for six hundred years, not once, till times comparatively recent, has an English sovereign put foot on Irish soil except to wage war. It is not less the fact, that in spite of all that Ireland suffered, or was taught to believe that she had suffered, at the hands of her English sovereigns, an instinct of loyalty—for it could be nothing else—impelled her to take part with the sovereign when at war with his rebellious English subjects. Had Charles I. taken Strafford’s advice and made use of his Irish resources as he might have done,

it is more than probable that he would have saved both his crown and his life. And though it may suit English historians to speak of the Irish rising in favour of James II. as rebellion, Ireland had a perfect right to act as she did, her fealty being due to the Crown, not to the Parliament of either England or Scotland. But we need not go two centuries back in order to illustrate our theory. When George IV. made his entrance into Dublin in 1822, he was received with an enthusiasm to which no bounds could be put. The procession in which he formed a part, from Leith to Edinburgh Castle, might be, under Sir Walter's management, more picturesque; but the spontaneous cheering of an excited crowd all along the route from Kingstown to Dublin Castle, went to the King's heart, just as it came from the hearts of those who made themselves hoarse with bawling. Nor can her present Majesty have forgotten the enthusiastic welcome which awaited her on each of the two occasions of her visits to Ireland. If there was disaffection anywhere, it did not venture to show itself within a radius of many miles round the spot on which she stood. And had it suited her convenience to go as far from the capital as Limerick or Galway, she would have seen that, in each of these towns, and over all the rural districts passed through in order to reach them, the same devotion to her royal person and Government would have been displayed.

Her Majesty's predilection for her Highland home, and the warm-hearted people among whom she there finds herself, is perfectly natural and easy to be understood. It was the favourite retreat of the lamented Prince Consort, who sought there, from year to year,

relaxation from the toils of State, and found it. God forbid that her Majesty should be called upon to turn her back upon Balmoral. But there is another part of her dominions which would fain share with Scotland the light of her countenance, and a more familiar and lasting intimacy with which would go further to raise the social condition of its inhabitants than all that parliaments could do. Let her fix her residence, say for a month every year, in what is now the Viceregal Lodge in Phoenix Park; let her hold levees and drawing-rooms, and otherwise dispense hospitalities in the Castle, and Dublin will soon become as loyal to her person and government as are London and Edinburgh. Nor could the arrangement fail to win the hearts of the rural population, were a second Balmoral established, say at Killarney, where both grouse and red-deer are to be found, more than sufficient to afford excellent sport to the younger branches of the royal family. An occasional visit there, were it only for a week or ten days at a time, would break up all secret societies, and render the natives, near and far away, as law-abiding as too many newspaper reports represent them to be at present the reverse.

We may be told, perhaps, that to ask of her Majesty all that has been here advanced, and especially that she should spend as much of her time in Ireland as she does in Scotland, is to put far too great a strain on her well-known patriotism. Scotland is endeared to her Majesty by the recollection of happy days spent there when life was to her unbroken sunshine. To bid her seek relaxation from affairs of State in a portion of her dominions where she must feel herself to be a stranger, and from which

the reports received have not of late been very satisfactory, would seem to her cruel mockery. Besides, there is this obvious objection to the arrangement — that whatever inconvenience is occasioned to her Ministers and to the public service by her Majesty's periodical sojourn at Balmoral would be largely increased were she to spend a month or six weeks every year in Ireland. We are far from undervaluing the force of this reasoning. If it should be urged and prove so cogent as to prevail, we, as faithful subjects, can only bow the head, though not without venturing to make another suggestion, against which less serious objections could be brought. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is often called upon to represent his royal mother on less serious occasions. Were he and H.R.H. the Princess to make Dublin their residence for a portion of every year, not as guests of a Lord Lieutenant, but as establishing their own Court there, the arrangement might scarcely, perhaps, achieve its end so immediately or entirely as if her Majesty herself occupied her Irish palace; but of its power to counterbalance or more than counterbalance the mischievous efforts of Home Rule agitators, no one who knows anything of the Irish character can entertain a doubt. For never, surely, was a royal pair so capable of speaking to the hearts of an imaginative people as the Prince and Princess of Wales. Their genial nature, their manners winning because frank, without the slightest approach to loss of dignity, the interest they take in every project which aims at bettering the condition of the poor,—these are the qualities the possession of which would at once command for them the admiration of Irishmen of all ranks; and

admiration with Irishmen soon grows into personal regard.

It will be seen that we have avoided going into detail on the subject of local government for either Ireland or England. The reason is obvious. As far as we are ourselves concerned, we count little on any benefit to be derived from democratising, more than it is already democratised, the machinery for administering the affairs of either counties or boroughs. Her Majesty's Ministers may, however, see the matter in a different light; and if they do, all who desire to escape the misfortune of a Radical Government must, to a man, support them. Nor let them be deterred from doing so by any dread of the charge of inconsistency that may be brought against them. Consistency and principle are high-sounding terms, to which wrong as well as right interpretations may be applied; and the interpretation will be decidedly wrong which connects them with a necessity for attempting impossibilities. It is in the steady perseverance with which he strives to attain a settled purpose, that the consistency of a public man is shown. It is in the nature of the end desired that the principle by which he is actuated is seen to be noble or the reverse. The great object of the present Administration is—what ought to be the object of all Administrations—to make the Irish one people, in loyalty and respect for law, with the English and the Scotch. All the methods heretofore tried, as well by Conservative as by Liberal Governments, to attain that end, have notoriously failed. There can be neither lack of consistency nor outrage to principle on the part of the present Government if they take a new departure, even

should it carry them into amicable relations with Irishmen of all shades of opinion. On one point they will of course listen to no suggestions. A separate Parliament for Ireland can never be; but to any proposal short of that, which bids fair to bring peace to the United Kingdom, they will give full consideration. The new Secretary of State—if a new one we are to have—must be an Irishman, and an Irishman who commands the confidence of the Irish people, and deserves their respect. An increase of the unpaid magistracy seems to be desired, and is really needed. Let no question of his religious faith, or lack of territorial qualification, stand between any intelligent and respectable Irishman and his election to a seat on the bench. Do justice to both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches, by placing the

latter in name, as it already is in reality, on the same footing with the Episcopal Church in Scotland. It is perhaps too late to talk of levelling up, now that the property of the Church has been confiscated; but surely some more appropriate use might be found for the small balance which is still undisposed of, than lending it to either landowners or tenants in order to help them out of their difficulties. But we must not go farther with matters of detail. These we willingly leave to be worked out by a Conservative Cabinet, and affirmed by a trusting as well as a strong Conservative majority in the new Parliament, against whose measures abuse will be poured out in vain, if they uphold the dignity of the throne, and the wellbeing and honour of the country at home and abroad.

THE HAWARDEN MANIFESTO: SPREADING THE NET.

EVERY one who has laughed at the spectacle of Don Juan in Molière's play, as he makes love to the two girls who each hold him by an arm, will readily discern the counterpart of the situation in Mr Gladstone sitting in his study in Hawarden Castle penning a manifesto calculated to catch the support alike of the Old Whig and the Young Radical. And as Charlotte and Mathurine went their ways, each convinced that she alone possessed the heart of the gallant, so both extremes of the Liberal party are satisfied with the ex-Premier's statement, each flattering itself that the tendency of the Hawarden declaration bears towards its own aims. "Mark its moderation!" cries the delighted Whig Liberal; "no encouragement to Radical fads or Chamberlain confiscations there." "What a glorious vista of possibilities is here indicated!" ejaculates the disciple of the Caucus; "here is all our own game started for us. And the whole programme is so vague, that not an old woman at the other end of the party can feel a bit alarmed. Hurrah for Chamberlain, the coming man! Gladstone has made his path straight."

We are not disposed to quarrel with either conclusion. The Hawarden manifesto justly sustains both constructions. But as the interests of the two wings of the Liberal party are in most respects opposed to each other, it follows that the programme advanced by Mr Gladstone cannot serve the views of both. The manifesto, in the abstract, may recommend itself to all sections of the Liberal party; its views, when put in practice, must incline to one

side, to the disappointment of the other. The Hawarden manifesto, therefore, may be accepted as a makeshift programme for promoting an imaginary unity among Liberal candidates at the poll. If it serves this purpose—and we doubt if its consistency is sufficient for even so temporary an end—it must then become useless, for its vague generalities and attempted reconciliation of irreconcilable aims would be utterly worthless as guides in shaping political action. It is a net spread to catch Liberals of every description; but so clumsy is the contrivance and so coarse are the meshes that it will only be willing captives whom it can ensnare.

Mr Gladstone's manifesto bears upon its face the obvious intention to deceive one or other of the wings of the Liberal party. Either he is alarmed at the precipitate pace at which the Radical faction has of late dragged him along, and is seeking refuge in the moderation of the Whig party, or he is endeavouring to lull the moderate Liberals by fair and statesmanlike phrases, while the Radicals have the assurance that he will direct his policy by their views. He cannot be acting honestly towards both. It is, however, a matter of comparative indifference which of the two sections of his followers he is seeking to deceive, provided he does not, by his manifesto, succeed in deluding the electors. In this we believe he will not succeed, astutely as he has arranged his tactics. It may suit Liberal members and candidates to dissemble their distrust under a cloak of confidence, and to sacrifice public interests for their own party aims; but the great

body of electors, both old and new, will read Mr Gladstone's statements in a more critical spirit. It is not much to the constituencies that the Liberal party should be able to compose its jealousies and antagonisms until the general election has been got over; what is far more important is, that a strong and united Ministry should be returned to office, and the country spared the degradation as well as danger of again seeing a Cabinet and its supporters so broken up by internal dissensions that they have to flee from their posts at the first indication of difficulty.

It is from the elector's standpoint that we propose to examine Mr Gladstone's manifesto. But we are at the very outset met by this difficulty. Although the document is addressed to the electors of Mid Lothian, its whole tenor clearly indicates that it is for Liberal candidates and Liberal members, and not for the constituencies, that the manifesto is intended. We are astonished that so experienced a statesman as Mr Gladstone should have fallen into such a mistake. However important it may be to his plans that Liberals should present an appearance of unanimity at the polls, he will find that it is not less necessary for him to make advances to the confidence of the electors. The old electors, who have been so miserably disappointed by the failure of the promises and anticipations on the strength of which they returned Mr Gladstone with a majority at his back in 1880, justly consider that they are entitled to explanations, if not apologies. The new voters, who are now to exercise their power unfettered by any previous committal of themselves, and with all the caution that usually attends the discharge of

an unwonted duty, demand some more definite assurances as to the course upon which they are invited to enter than Mr Gladstone has vouchsafed to them. The Liberal leader has in fact overreached himself by his own astuteness, and committed a grievous electioneering blunder. He has betrayed the fact that he is much more concerned in composing the differences among his parliamentary followers, and in securing their united support for himself, than in conciliating the confidence of the constituencies, which he does not possess at present, and of which he stands so sorely in need.

Regarded as an appeal to the electorate, the Hawarden manifesto is an assuming, if not an overweening document. It is such a statement as might justly have been issued by a Minister whose management of affairs had been one unbroken success; who had fulfilled all the assurances by which he had raised himself to office; who, instead of deserting his post in the moment of danger, had come to the people to resign his charge, triumphantly conscious of his deservance of their suffrages. It is an affront to the intelligence of the electors for Mr Gladstone to assume such a position. We may tolerate the vapourings of his less responsible followers; but we desire to see in a leader of Mr Gladstone's capacity and conscientiousness some recognition of the fact that he comes before the country covered with imputations of serious political blundering, if not of grave administrative crime, such as the responsibility for the destruction of Alexandria, for the massacres in the Soudan, and for the abandonment of Gordon to slaughter. We would have expected of a statesman of his tact and experience that he would have frankly recognised his

position, and have proceeded to exculpate himself and his Government in the eyes of his countrymen before advancing any further claims to popular support. No doubt Mr Gladstone has good reason to presume upon the public tolerance; but the new constituencies at least must feel that he is treating them after a very cavalier fashion.

Our opinion of the manifesto itself, apart from its aspect as an electioneering instrument, may be briefly summed up. The nation is invited to accept the Liberal guidance in entering upon a political course so vaguely indicated that it may lead anywhere or nowhere. This invitation is backed up by explanations of past failures, based mainly upon misstatements of both the position of the late Government and the action of its opponents; and no guarantees are offered that the mistakes committed in the practical action of the past will not be inherent in the abstract policy of the future. Its misrepresentations of fact are too palpable to influence public opinion; the prospects of the future which it unfolds are too dim and intangible to excite enthusiasm. The manifesto in form and scope pretends to be a very comprehensive survey of political opinion; and yet it guardedly leaves out of consideration all those novel and revolutionary doctrines regarding Government property and public liberty which are unquestionably disturbing many sections of our society, and which, rightly or wrongly, look to Mr Gladstone for sympathy or promotion. If the Hawarden manifesto should prove to be, as Mr Gladstone almost hints it will be, the "last oracle," it will be a matter of regret that he has kept silence on these subjects at a time when speech was

so necessary to make his position intelligible.

We may pass over without comment his undeserved eulogy on the legislative work of the Parliament of 1880; and also his accusation of obstruction against the Conservative party, which, like many other allegations in the manifesto, is utterly unfounded. His remarks, however, on foreign policy, demand a few words of rejoinder. Starting with the Treaty of Berlin, Mr Gladstone claims credit for carrying out two of its unexecuted provisions "which were highly menacing to the general peace." For Great Britain the reminiscence is not a happy one. The electors have not yet forgotten how ridiculous Mr Gladstone made this country in the eyes of Europe by his Dulcigno demonstration, or that the natural outcome of the Berlin Conference was our practical exclusion from the concert of Europe down to the time when Lord Salisbury came into power. With regard to our recent difficulties with Russia, Mr Gladstone asserts that "no particular administration or party is responsible." His exoneration as regards the Conservative Ministries is quite gratuitous; that the recent crisis on the Afghan frontier was the direct outcome of Liberal foreign policy is demonstrable with mathematical certainty. In South Africa, says Mr Gladstone, "we pursued a policy that has left the Transvaal free and divested of all hostility, and has averted a war of European and Christian races throughout the South African States which would have been alike menacing to our power and scandalous in the face of civilisation and of Christendom." Put into honest English, this means that we pusillanimously accepted our defeat at the hands of the Boers, sacrificed our

power of influencing the South African States in the direction of civilisation and stable government, and left behind us a crop of troubles which has already borne fruit that is not yet all reaped. It is significant of the indifference of Mr Gladstone to the empire, that but for the apologetic references to his failures in India and Africa, no other notice is taken of that Greater Britain which must be the special interest of any statesman who presumes to guide her Majesty's Government.

Mr Gladstone's complacent *résumé* of his policy in Egypt betrays the fact that not only is he ignorant of the enormity of the blunders he has occasioned, but also of the feelings with which the people of this country regard the terrible tragedies of which these have been the cause. On this latter point he will in due course be enlightened. The statesman who sent Gordon to certain slaughter, and made the fate of the most gallant of modern Englishmen a political plaything, little understands the temper of British electors when he thinks he can pass over the abandonment of that hero without at least an attempted apology, or even a tear of feigned regret. Mr Gladstone seems to consider that if he can only make out that intervention in Egypt was forced upon him by the Dual Control, he has completely exonerated himself from all blame for his Egyptian failures. Marvellous that a man of such infinite rhetorical resources could think of appearing at the hustings with such a lame excuse! Granting that the Dual Control was the disastrous arrangement that he has always represented it to be, why should he have bound himself by it when France, by her retirement in 1882 from active participation in Eryp-

tian affairs, practically put an end to the Control and its obligations? Our "paramount interests," which were confined to the safety and free navigation of the Canal, could have been preserved without precipitating ourselves into the Egyptian conflict, and we might have waited until the civil disturbances had been settled by that "providential order" to which Mr Gladstone seems anxious to commit the care of the survivors in the Sudan. Mr Gladstone entirely misapprehends the sentiments with which the electors regard the disgrace with which his Egyptian policy has covered the country, when he thinks to clear himself by taking credit for good intentions which never came to anything, and by drawing a favourable contrast between his own actual failures and the imaginary disasters which might have resulted from the policy of his opponents.

Mr Gladstone's domestic review contains little to captivate the electors, and holds forth even less promise of practical legislation. His survey clothes the commonplace subjects of ordinary political discussion in the widest generalities, and he deals with them as dispassionately as if they related to the internal affairs of Saturn. On many of the topics which he touches on, we cannot allow the Liberal party the monopoly of interest which he is disposed to claim. The restraint of our growing expenditure, never greater than under Mr Gladstone's own administration, is a subject on which the Conservative leaders will have some more practical propositions to put forward than the hazy economics in which the ex-Premier takes refuge. Again, on the subjects of local government, of the free transfer of land, of registration, he will

find his opponents well abreast of him. With regard to Ireland, which Mr Gladstone relegates to the conclusion of his manifesto, he will in all probability find himself confronted with more definite and effective proposals than he himself has had courage to give utterance to. Whatever claims Mr Gladstone may have to rank as a friend to Ireland have already been repudiated after a fashion that assures us he can no longer calculate on sympathy or support from its masses.

Three questions are touched upon in the Hawarden manifesto as ulterior subjects of legislation, or of political discussion, but touched only to be left where they lie. These are the reform of the House of Lords, Disestablishment, and Free Education; and since Mr Gladstone had no information to give us on these subjects, it is not easy to see why they should have been introduced at all, unless as a hint to his Radical friends that amidst all his professed moderation there were some of their aims in which, when opportunity served, he would be ready to lend them a hand. We need no manifesto to assure us which course of conduct Mr Gladstone would pursue if any of these topics stood in his way. He is quite prepared to make political capital out of the reform or even the abolition of the House of

Lords—in fact he has already done so in the franchise controversy; he will sacrifice even the Church of England for the sake of preserving a parliamentary majority; and as for the expense of Free Education, it is but a flea-bite compared with the burdens which he has already assisted the Radicals in imposing upon the ratepayers.

Speciously as it has been conceived, the Gladstone programme will, in our opinion, fail to leave a favourable impression on the minds of electors. It may afford a pretext for unity to Liberal candidates, but it does not provide them with the policy which they have been so anxiously seeking after. And it is doubtful whether a unity which depends upon the measured and guarded language of a manifesto, will survive the freer and more fervid eloquence of the hustings, which can scarcely fail to bring to light the conflicting positions of the different sections of the Liberal party. Let our readers, in the meantime, contrast with the misty and halting language of Mr Gladstone the outspoken, straightforward utterances of Lord Iddesleigh at Aberdeen. Before long we venture to promise the country a programme of a different stamp from the Hawarden manifesto, which will have the merits of at least frankness, intelligibility, and honesty of purpose.

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THE DUTY OF THE NEW ELECTORATE.

THE political contest which will be fought out during this present month of November is one upon which depend greater issues than any which have for many years been the subjects of contention at a general election. The question to be decided by the constituencies is not merely as to the preponderance of one or other of two great political parties, the supremacy of this or that statesman, or the verdict, favourable or the reverse, to be pronounced upon some great and well-defined policy which has been the object of national interest and public discussion. Broader, larger, more vital issues are before us. It is not too much to say that every institution of our country is not only placed upon its trial, but has been more or less attacked or impeached before those who will shortly have to decide upon its value to the nation. Moreover, whilst the electors will, to a very large extent, be persons who have never before been placed in the same position,

they have been and still are exposed to the temptations, misrepresentations, and wiles of political agents and candidates, to an extent which renders the unbiassed and thoughtful exercise of their new power a matter of some difficulty to themselves, though of the most vital importance to their country. Appeals have been constantly made to "the new electorate" as if they were beings of an entirely different mould from those who have hitherto formed the constituencies of the kingdom, and apparently founded upon the theory that their instincts and interests are wholly distinct and apart from the old electoral body. Inasmuch, however, as the Tory Reform Bill of 1867 bestowed household suffrage in the represented towns, it is of course the truth that the present measure, the natural and logical outcome of that bill, only adds to the electorate then constituted men of a similar calibre and character to those who, since 1867, have returned three Parliaments. There

is practically nothing in which the new electorate differs from that to which it has been added, although, of course, the agricultural labourer is more largely represented, inasmuch as it was only in a few grouped boroughs that this particular class were to be found among the old voters.

But, as a whole, it is no new type of man who has been vested with political power; it is only an addition, though one of considerable amount, which has been made to men of the existing type, and there is no reason why the attempt to persuade them that they are bound to differ from those who have previously possessed electoral power, should be received by them with any belief or favour. It is in the full confidence that such preposterous attempts will fail, and that the new electors will recognise the fact of the identity of interests between themselves and other citizens of our free monarchy, that we desire, earnestly and solemnly, to call their attention to the present political crisis.

The immediate result of the new elections will be either the establishment in power of the present Conservative Ministry, or their prompt dismissal, in order that they may be replaced by those to whose places they have recently succeeded. It is therefore of the utmost importance that before going to the poll, the electors should make up their minds as to which Ministry is best deserving of support, and to which the interests of the country may be most safely confided. And here we would pause on the threshold of our inquiry into the right answer to this question, in order to point out the fallacy contained in the proposition which is so constantly placed before the new electors by the candidates of the

Radical party. "We," say they, "gave you the franchise, and therefore it is for us you should undoubtedly vote." As a matter of fact, it is of course abundantly clear to every impartial mind that neither political party can fairly claim the exclusive credit of having "given the franchise" to the new electorate.

During the present generation there has practically existed no party in the State which has been opposed to the extension of the franchise. At particular moments, indeed, there have been differences of opinion as to the extent and method of that extension; but just as it is contended that Mr Disraeli, in outbidding his opponents and giving household suffrage in boroughs in 1867, had no right to claim the sole credit for his party for doing that which he was only able to accomplish by Liberal assistance, so we as unhesitatingly assert that it is absurd and unjust on the part of the "Liberal" party to claim the sole credit of the further extension of the same suffrage in 1885, that extension having been cordially acquiesced in by the Conservatives. A denial of this fact is palpably dishonest on the part of the Radicals to-day, because nothing is more historically true than that the Conservative party, so far from opposing the contemplated extension of popular rights, merely asked that the scheme of redistribution should be made known before the Franchise Bill became law (a demand so reasonable, that on looking back one marvels at the pettiness and party spirit which at first refused it), and at the same time deliberately and solemnly placed on record their readiness to support the proposed extension of the franchise. Let us, however, suppose for a moment that the Radicals could make out their

case, and that it might be conceded to them that it was by their action and exertions alone that the household suffrage in towns, given by the Conservative Government in 1867, was extended to counties in 1885.¹ Even if such were the case, it would be little less than insulting to a new elector to accost him after the fashion of our Radical candidates: "*We gave you the vote—therefore vote for us.*" A man thus addressed would, if he had any self-respect, answer in some such words as these: "If you gave me the vote, I suppose you did so under the belief that I was a person competent to exercise a calm and impartial judgment upon the questions of the day. If I am such, I can vote for no person upon any such selfish grounds as those upon which you base your appeal; but I shall endeavour to exercise my judgment, and vote for those whom I think to be most likely to advance the interests of my country." This is the true answer with which to meet the audacious and preposterous claims of the Radical candidates to the support of the new voters; and we now proceed to place before the latter some considerations which we think should weigh with them in the exercise of that judgment, and should direct them in giving their votes.

There are three points to which we would venture specially to direct attention: first, the programme with which the late Government entered office, and the circumstances under which they commenced and carried on their official existence; secondly,

the manner in which they quitted, and the conditions upon which their successors assumed office; and thirdly, the programme of each of the great political parties, so far as it can be judged from the public utterances of leading men on one side and on the other.

With regard to the first point we are in little difficulty, since the programme of the Liberal party was clearly set forth in that Mid-Lothian campaign which has become historical, and which exercised so great an influence in the elections of 1880. It is true that a very large portion of the success which attended Liberal candidates in that year was due to the moderate conduct and statesman-like leadership of Lord Hartington in the five previous years, during which Mr Gladstone had ostensibly relinquished the position which he had previously held as the acknowledged head of his party. It is true, moreover, that the mass of moderate men throughout the country, who went to the poll in the belief that they were supporting Lord Hartington and his policy, were strengthened in that belief by Mr Gladstone's own words in the first Mid-Lothian speech on November 25th, 1879: "*I hope the verdict of the country will give to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of its affairs.*" But the unanimity with which Mr Gladstone was welcomed back by the Liberal party as their leader, when he had overcome his temporary desire for retirement from official life, and the position which was promptly assigned him as head of the

¹ The value of the Radical contention that it is the exclusive property of their party to extend electoral rights, may be tested by a reference to the recent proceedings in Registration Courts, when the Radicals have objected to the votes of soldiers, the undergraduates at the Universities, and the London stockbrokers, besides defeating by obstruction and delay the Conservative attempt to enfranchise the police.

Ministry which succeeded that of Lord Beaconsfield, justifies us in referring to his Mid-Lothian speeches as containing the principles upon which the Government of 1880 was formed, and the programme which its members adopted as the platform of the Liberal party.

It will be readily admitted that Mr Gladstone's main principle consisted in the entire condemnation of everything which had been done by Lord Beaconsfield's Administration. In the same speech to which we have referred, he said that his indictment against the Conservative Government was "very serious"; and on the ground that "it is well in these things that men should be held to the words that they utter, should be made to feel that they are responsible for them," he proceeded to quote words which he had previously uttered in denunciation of his opponents:—

"The management of finance, the scale of expenditure, the constantly growing arrears of legislation, serious as they are, only lead up to still greater questions. I hold before you, as I have held in the House of Commons, that the faith and honour of the country have been gravely compromised in the foreign policy of the Ministry; that by the disturbance of confidence, and lately even of peace which they have brought about, they have prolonged and aggravated the public distress; that they have augmented the power and influence of the Russian empire, even while estranging the feelings of the population; that they have embarked the Crown and people in an unjust war (the Afghan War) full of mischief, if not of positive danger to India; and that by their use of the treaty-making and war-making powers of the Crown, they have abridged the just rights of Parliament, and have presented prerogative to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect which tends to make it insecure."

It will be seen from these words

that Mr Gladstone's condemnation of Lord Beaconsfield's Government was by no means of a half-hearted or undecided character. He deplored, moreover, the difference between the "inheritance" which would be left by that Government to its successors, and that which had been bequeathed in 1874 by his own Government. "We," he said, "simply gave over to *them* what every Government has usually given over to its successors." But now, in 1879, "never in the recollection of living man has such an entangled web been given over to any set of men to unravel," and "men must be men of a very extraordinary taste who desire to take such a succession as will be left by Lord Beaconsfield's Government." It is impossible for any one to read the words which we have just quoted without contrasting the condition of affairs which they so vividly describe with that to which Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives have so recently succeeded. Take first "the management of finance, and the scale of expenditure," for which Lord Beaconsfield was so unsparingly condemned. In his speech in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange, on November 29th, 1879, Mr Gladstone more fully developed his charge under this head, and stated to his audience that the figures which "fairly expressed the relative expenditure of the two Governments" were these—"the Liberal expenditure £70,000,000, and the Tory expenditure £78,000,000;" and great was the credit which he claimed for himself and his friends for this eight millions which had been saved to the country by their greater prudence and superior knowledge of finance. Melancholy, indeed, must be Mr Gladstone's reflections when he has to face the fact that his own Gov-

ernment, from 1880 until May 1885, had brought up the expenditure to *one hundred millions*, and bequeathed to its successors a heavy deficit and a higher rate of income-tax than had been levied in any one year of "Tory extravagance." If this increase of 22 millions of expenditure was unavoidable, it may suggest itself that the same might have been said of the smaller increase of eight millions for which the Conservative Government was so severely judged. But, unavoidable or not, the fact stands before us, clear and incontrovertible, that the Government of Mr Gladstone utterly failed to practise that economy, or to reduce the expenditure of the country, to do which was an essential part of the Mid-Lothian programme. "The constantly growing arrears of legislation" suggest similar thoughts. Never was there a House of Commons in which more time was wasted and greater "arrears of legislation" allowed to accumulate, than that which has just concluded its last session. And why? It is easy enough to talk of "obstruction," but the fact remains that Mr Gladstone's Government, with an enormous and subservient majority, deliberately undertook so to alter the procedure of Parliament as to prevent "obstruction" and facilitate business, and egregiously failed to effect either the one thing or the other. We do not stop to inquire whether this failure resulted from their own natural incapacity, from their neglect to take their political opponents into council upon a matter in which no party differences should or would have prevented joint action for the common weal, or from the inherent difficulties of the subject with which they had to grapple. Our only contention is, that if Lord Beaconsfield's Government de-

served censure for allowing "arrears of legislation" to accumulate, the words of Mr Gladstone's condemnation are equally applicable, and in a still greater degree, to the failure of his own Administration in the same respect.

When we come to the question of "the faith and honour of the country" having "been gravely compromised by the foreign policy of the (Beaconsfield) Ministry," we are at a loss to imagine how any member of Mr Gladstone's late Cabinet can read these words without shame as he thinks of the comparison which must of necessity be made between the policy and conduct of the two Governments. In his third Mid-Lothian speech, Mr Gladstone had laid down as his cardinal principles of foreign policy,—1. Good government at home—i.e., "to foster the strength of the empire by just legislation and economy;" 2. To preserve to the nations of the world the blessings of peace; 3. To maintain the concert of Europe; 4. To avoid needless and entangling engagements; 5. To acknowledge the equal rights of all nations; 6. A sympathy with freedom. Read by the light of subsequent events, Mr Gladstone's declaration of his six points reads indeed like a bitter satire. The new electorate may judge for itself how the "strength of the empire" has been fostered by the lavish and useless waste of blood and money in Egypt and the Soudan, and how economy has been evinced by the gigantic increase of expenditure to which we have already alluded. It is only in bitter irony that any one can maintain that "the blessings of peace" have been preserved by any action of the Gladstone Government. From first to last their career has been marked by war and bloodshed; and this, to do

them justice, not because they had any love of such things, but on account of their inability to understand that peace is not to be secured by the utterance of empty platitudes, by grandiloquent professions, and, least of all, by vacillation and weakness in action, but rather by the adoption of a settled policy and a firm attitude in its conduct, so that the world may know that, if necessary, the might of Great Britain will be exerted to maintain her right. Under the late Government that might has indeed at times been exerted, but invariably "too late" to effect that good which might have been effected by its timely exercise.

What can we say of the third point of Mr Gladstone's foreign policy? If it can be said in any sense to have "maintained the concert of Europe," it has been by uniting the other Powers of Europe against the shift and uncertain policy of the British Government. Of "needless and entangling engagements," it is scarcely necessary to speak. Whether in dealing with the Boers of the Transvaal, with the Khedive of Egypt, or with the French Government with reference to Egyptian affairs, what have we had but a series of "engagements" of an "entangling"—nay, of an embarrassing, and even of a humiliating—character? We have, indeed, "acknowledged the equal rights of all nations" by dragging the flag of England through the dirt in South Africa, and withdrawing from our acknowledged position as the dominant race in that part of the world. It may indeed be doubted whether the Gladstone Government had in its mind these "equal rights of nations," or a profound "sympathy for freedom," when it dubbed the rebel Boers "patriots," and at the same time

abandoned to their tender mercies those native tribes to whom our faith and honour were pledged, and who had a far better title to the name of "patriots" than the invaders and oppressors to whom they were handed over by the British Government. It may be questioned, also, whether the slaughter of thousands of Arabs, fighting in their own country, and for that country's cause, was entirely consistent with the two last of Mr Gladstone's great principles; and the only thing which is beyond question is the fact that, for all Mr Gladstone's wars and slaughters, there is positively nothing to show. It is not too much to say that every word of censure and condemnation addressed by him to Lord Beaconsfield's Government in 1880 with regard to their foreign policy, may be applied with tenfold greater force and justice to his own Administration; and that this application will certainly be made by those who have watched with careful and impartial eyes the progress of events.

Apart, however, from his general condemnation of their policy, Mr Gladstone declared that the Conservative Government had "by the disturbance of confidence, and lately even of peace, prolonged and aggravated the public distress." These words, like many of the utterances of the speaker, are of somewhat dubious signification; but, taken in their ordinary sense, they are singularly applicable to the policy and the results of the policy of his own Government, throughout the whole of whose existence no man has ever been able to feel confidence in the stability of any species of property or any institution of the country. There has been, from first to last, a general insecurity, an uneasy feeling as to what would be the next object of Radical

attack—what Mr Gladstone might find it necessary to sacrifice to the maintenance of his majority in the House of Commons. Mr Gladstone did not condescend to specify the particular manner in which Lord Beaconsfield's Government could be said to have "aggravated" the public distress; but it cannot be denied that any "distress" which existed in 1880 has been enormously "aggravated" since that time—i.e., during the continuance of office of Mr Gladstone's Government—and that it is Lord Salisbury's Administration which has promptly recognised that the general depression of trade is something which deserves consideration and inquiry, for which purpose they have recommended her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission. Let the new electorate note, moreover, that the members and supporters of Mr Gladstone's Government have refused to serve on this Commission, and done their utmost to discredit it, lest, forsooth, something hostile to our present system of so-called "Free Trade" should result from its labours. But surely, if that system be faultless, it will come out from the inquiry all the more firmly rooted in the public favour; and if there is any suggestion that it has aught to do with the general depression of our trade, commerce, and agriculture, the presence of avowed and earnest free-traders upon the Commission was not only desirable in order that such suggestion should be fairly combated, but the refusal to serve has an appearance of a lack of patriotism and a want of sympathy with our suffering traders which the latter will scarcely forget. The rest of Mr Gladstone's indictment requires but short notice.

Men who have watched the course of events during the last

five years will smile at the charge against Lord Beaconsfield's Government of having "augmented the power and influence of the Russian empire." We have no desire to dwell upon the more recent "diplomatic controversies" between the two countries; it is not our object to rake up the past in such a manner as to make the present more difficult than it is; but when we remember the state of tension which existed in the spring of the present year, the apprehensions of war, the vacillations of the Gladstone Cabinet, and their behaviour in recalling Sir Peter Lumsden in such a manner as to bring down upon their heads the indignation of every brave and honourable Englishman, we remember once more the words of Mr Gladstone's indictment, with the thought that the accusation he dared to make in 1880 is one which even he himself must now be desirous of consigning to speedy oblivion. It is not necessary for us to gauge the amount of "mischief, if not of positive danger to India," for which Mr Gladstone's Government have been responsible, but here again his words of wrath against Lord Beaconsfield stand up in solemn judgment against him. Nor less does the accusation of "having presented prerogative to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect" recoil upon its author. It was, indeed, a strange charge to be brought by the Minister who, when he desired to effect the abolition of purchase in the army, had not scrupled to employ the prerogative of the Crown to overcome his political opponents, in a most unusual, if not unconstitutional, manner. But if it was true that in any sense Lord Beaconsfield had followed so dangerous an example, how much greater a sinner must that Minister be who,

last autumn, for mere party purposes, excited a popular agitation against that branch of the Legislature with the existence of which the prerogative of the Crown is closely identified, and thus directly imperilled that prerogative so far as he had the power to do so? Was there ever so unreasonable, so unconstitutional, so wicked an agitation? The House of Lords had demanded that the scheme under which political power was to be distributed throughout the country should be made known to Parliament and the people simultaneously with the passing of the bill for the extension of the suffrage. Mr Gladstone refused this most reasonable demand; and because the House of Lords persisted, he and his friends deliberately misrepresented that branch of the Legislature as desirous of refusing the Franchise Bill, and agitated the country from end to end with a perfectly wanton and unnecessary agitation. The result, as we all know, showed that the firmness of the House of Lords, supported by a large body of public opinion, obliged Mr Gladstone to give way. The principles of his scheme were communicated to the leaders of the Opposition; it was discovered that these dreaded Tories were in reality more "Liberal" than their opponents, and by no means opposed to a large measure of redistribution, and the desired end was obtained, as it might have been without the autumn agitation or the unconstitutional attack upon the House of Lords. But if ever the "prerogative" of the Crown, involved as it is in the existence and constitution of the House of Lords, was wantonly and mischievously "presented to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect," it was so presented by the action and for the political and party interests of Mr Gladstone in the autumn agitation of 1884.

We have thus shown that the main feature of the programme of the Liberal party in 1880 was condemnation, and, if possible, reversal of Lord Beaconsfield's policy in every essential particular.

How well or ill they have succeeded in that reversal is now a matter of history. Is there one thinking man in the community, Liberal or Tory, who can maintain that Great Britain is in a more prosperous state at the conclusion than she was at the commencement of Mr Gladstone's Government? We have spoken of the programme of that Government as generally, if somewhat negatively, put before the country in the first Mid-Lothian campaign. Let us now speak of its further development, and of the circumstances under which it was developed. Mr Gladstone's fervid appeals and denunciations had their full weight with the constituencies. The "moderate Liberals" followed Lord Hartington to a man, the Radical element threw their whole weight into the scale, and the result gave to the "Liberal" party a majority larger than has been possessed by any Ministry for the last fifty years. Bearing this in mind, let any man glance over the legislative achievements of the last five years, and ask himself whether they have in any degree approximated to the quantity or quality of work which the country had a right to expect from a Government so powerfully supported. "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform" were inscribed upon the banner which Mr Gladstone waved over the heads of the Mid-Lothian electors, and these old watchwords of the Liberal party were once more successfully invoked to unite the discordant fragments of a party which had in reality no natural bond of union. The consequence

of that success, and of the triumph of men who assumed office with no policy of their own, and no fixed idea save that of reversing the policy of their predecessors, might easily have been foretold. From first to last the legislation of the Gladstone Government has been an attempt to preserve, by compromise upon every question, that unity of their party which has never in reality existed, and to secure at all hazards the compactness of the majority which had placed them in power. The infallible result of such a course has been gradually to commit the moderate and constitutional Liberals to principles and projects which they would never have initiated of themselves, and to which the necessity of conciliating their Radical supporters has alone induced them to submit. But in spite of the pliancy of the "moderate" section, and of the sacrifices made upon the altar of unity, the Government of Mr Gladstone failed to keep its majority. This fact is in itself an answer to the allegations of the supporters of that Government with respect to the circumstances under which they so hastily abandoned their offices. If their defeat upon the Budget of 1885 was a preconcerted scheme, desired and connived at by themselves, in order to place their political opponents in a difficulty, and to secure time, during the interval before the elections, for the full exercise of that platform oratory in which they so much delight, and by means of which they hoped to defend their miserable failures during the last five years—then, indeed, no language would be strong enough to express the indignation which every honest man must feel at such dishonest strategy. But if, believing their earnest protestations to the contrary, we acquit them of such a charge, it

is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that their large majority of 1880 had become so profoundly dissatisfied with their conduct of public affairs as to be willing to leave them deliberately in the lurch sooner than share any longer the responsibility of their continued blunders. It is quite true, no doubt, as Lord Hartington has himself admitted, that the Gladstone Government could have obtained from the House of Commons a vote of confidence upon the day following their defeat, which would have justified their continuance in office. Their unwillingness to accept such a vote shows pretty conclusively (even without Lord Hartington's further admission upon the point) that their own internal divisions, and the disaffection among their followers, had reached a point at which it became practically impossible for them to carry on the government without a total reconstruction—if even by such means they could have temporarily preserved the appearance of unity. This confession of Lord Hartington entirely disposes of the silly and malicious attacks which have been directed against Lord Salisbury for his assumption of office. It is perfectly well known to the initiated that Lord Salisbury would infinitely have preferred that the late Government should have wound up the affairs of the session, and appealed to the verdict of the country upon their general policy without an interregnum, which would enable them to pose before the electorate as men who, if they had sinned, had condoned their crimes by inflicting upon themselves that penalty of resignation which was the utmost punishment which the unfavourable verdict of the country could have inflicted. It is well known that, in the opinion of the great majority

of the Conservative party, the acceptance of office by their leaders was unfortunate in a party sense, and one which should if possible be avoided. But the Conservative party had and have a generous confidence in their leader, and they know that in taking the course which did not at the moment appear to be that most advantageous to his party, Lord Salisbury was actuated by the sole and single-minded desire to do his duty to his Queen and country. It was difficult, indeed, for Lord Salisbury to have done more than he actually did do to persuade the late Government to retain their offices. It is said by some of their friends that they were in reality ready to do so; but it must not be forgotten that, so far as we can judge from published statements, Mr Gladstone was only prepared to resume office and to reconstruct his Government, in the event of Lord Salisbury declaring that he was unable to form a Ministry—an inability which certainly did not exist, and which could not therefore have been declared. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that having challenged the conduct of the Government by more than one vote of censure, an obstinate refusal to take office would have exposed the Conservative leaders to misrepresentation and misconstruction, of which their opponents would not have been slow to take advantage.

The confusion of affairs, both at home and abroad, might have justified a timid or feeble statesman in declining to undertake the task of forming a Government under the peculiar circumstances of the moment; but, fortunately for the country, Lord Salisbury is neither feeble nor timid, and having seen clearly the duty which lay before him, he determined to perform that duty without fear or hesita-

tion. It is not our desire to boast of the manner in which the present Administration have so far performed their work; but a comparison between their conduct of public business with that of their predecessors will hardly result to their disadvantage; whilst the increased confidence at home, and improvement of our relations with foreign Powers, are matters of common notoriety.

Our Conservative Ministers are accused, indeed, of having "no policy," and this before they have had one single session in which to place their policy before the country! Mr Chamberlain has contemptuously likened them to "caretakers," and coolly desires the country to accept it as an honourable and reasonable arrangement that the Conservative party should serve the purposes of their "Radical" opponents by holding office until the latter shall have had time to compose their internal differences, and decide which of our country's institutions they shall next attack. It is possible, however, that the country may take a different view of the matter, and, remembering the blunders and failures which have so disgusted the nation during the last six years, will think that those who are responsible for the same had better remain for a season at least without the opportunity of repeating and increasing them.

About the policy of the Conservative Government, and the programme of the Conservative party, there is and there need be no concealment. It suited Radical orators and the Radical press to proclaim far and wide the absence of a Conservative policy, until the magnificent speech of Lord Salisbury at Newport exploded like a shell in their midst. That speech—one of the most calm and

statesmanlike which the leader of the constitutional party has ever delivered—stands out in marked contrast to that new Mid-Lothian manifesto to which we shall presently allude. It is not too much to say that it has elevated the whole tone of the political warfare which is just now raging around us, appealing to higher instincts than the mere passion of party, and bringing us back to the days when principle and not expediency was the rule of our leading statesmen. It has shown the untenable nature of the claim so impudently made by the Radical party to the monopoly of all legislative virtue, and established the claim of the Conservative party to deal as freely and in as truly "Liberal" a spirit as their opponents with all those social problems which stand before us for solution.

It is very evident that, so far as the great questions of land and local government are concerned, Lord Salisbury will enter upon both with an unprejudiced spirit, differing widely, indeed, from those who would found their legislation upon the theory and assumption that our previous system has been altogether faulty and wrong, but perfectly ready to amend that system in accordance with the altered requirements of the times. Whilst, however, he makes the liberality of his intentions sufficiently obvious, Lord Salisbury points out the unpractical and unbusiness-like nature of some of Mr Chamberlain's suggestions, and shows how the solicitude of the latter for the welfare of the agricultural labourer would not improbably tend to the ruin instead of the prosperity of the class in whose behalf it has been so loudly proclaimed. Against proposals such as these, as against the desire to get rid of religious education, and to disestablish and

disendow the Church of England, Lord Salisbury protests in strong and vigorous language, proving to us that we have at least one statesman left who knows his own mind, and is not afraid to speak out. But, in truth, this Newport speech only expressed thoughts and feelings which have long animated the Conservative party. Their programme is one which, irrespective of party ties, should at the present epoch of our history unite all lovers of our constitution. Their foreign policy will be at least one which will command the respect of other nations, for it will be firm as well as conciliatory, and will avoid that fatal error of "never knowing your own mind," which appears to be inseparable from a Gladstone Administration. At home, there will doubtless be none of that swaggering patronage of "the labouring classes" by which blatant Radicalism seeks to hoodwink the agricultural labourer and to cajole the operatives in the towns; nor will there be wicked attempts to secure the votes of these, the most numerous class of electors, by misrepresenting the classes above them as being unduly prosperous at their expense, and dealing largely in magnificent promises which can never be realised. There will, however, be that real sympathy with these great classes which has already been shown in a practical form by that legislation with respect to their housing and general condition, to which they are indebted to Lord Salisbury and Sir R. Cross; there will be honest attempts made to relieve distress and afford employment by every legitimate means, keeping always in view the encouragement of that self-reliance which is the surest road to success, and never forgetting that the interests of all classes are closely interwoven together,

and that, instead of exciting strife, envy, and jealousy between class and class, it is the duty of the true patriot and the wise legislator to promote the harmonious working together of classes for the general benefit of the community.

In speaking, however, of the policy of the Conservative Government, we must never forget that it is less easy to define than that of their opponents, because, whilst the former desire a steady and progressive improvement within the lines of the constitution, the latter cannot exist without the stimulus of an agitation against some part of that constitution, and found their policy upon some startling change to be effected therein. Quiet times, peace, and prosperity are as wholesome for Conservative interests as are times of turbulence and distress for the Radical party, who never scruple to make use of such public disasters as a leverage by which to upset some existing institution, and forward their general views in the direction of republicanism. Proposals for large changes constitute of themselves a policy which it is easy to flaunt before the eyes of the people; and the latter will do well to reflect that when Radical orators scoff at the present Administration as having "no policy," the real meaning of the accusation is, not that the Conservative Government is not fully prepared to deal with all the great questions of the day upon which legislation may be required, but that they do not seek to catch the popular vote by inscribing upon their banners a claptrap programme, or by promising great constitutional changes, which, however attractive to the imagination, will assuredly fail to bring with them the advantages which their advocates recklessly promise, and ought, at any rate, to be approach-

ed with the careful consideration which is demanded by their importance, and not as objects to be aimed at as a party triumph.

There is, moreover, a reason beyond those we have stated which makes the declaration of a policy more necessary to the Liberal than to the Conservative party. The latter, animated by a patriotic love to the constitution which experience has shown to be the freest in the world, have, in their desire for its defence, a bond of unity which holds them together, without the necessity of a declaration of some specific action upon any given political question. On the other hand, the Radicals are by their very nature a disunited party, one section desiring to attack one, another section another, institution, and being therefore sadly in want of somebody or something to give them that cohesion which is necessary to ensure success at the polling-booths. The "somebody" at this moment is Mr Gladstone; and to those who believe in the existence of such a thing as political principle, nothing is more melancholy than the farce which is now being played for the sole and simple purpose of securing that cohesion. "The unity of the Liberal party" must be secured at all hazards. Why? Not because there is any one great principle at stake, nor because there is any doubt that the late "Liberal" Administration egregiously failed to carry out the programme with which it assumed office. "The unity of the Liberal party" simply means the temporary abnegation of all political principle whatever, and the entire oblivion of the melancholy period during which Mr Gladstone's Government was in power, in order that "the Tories" may be driven from office, and that the leaders

who call themselves "Liberal" and are at the head of the political organisation known by that name, may be restored to office. With this view, and in order to achieve this result, Mr Gladstone has just published the "manifesto," which is to be accepted for the moment as the programme of the Liberal party. We say advisedly "for the moment," for it is sufficiently obvious that the doctrines of this manifesto are only suited for the temporary purpose with which they have been published. That purpose once achieved, it will be seen that the "unity" of the Liberal party cannot be secured without a modification of these doctrines, and a new departure upon lines far more advanced than would at the present moment serve the ends of the conscientious leaders who guide the "great Liberal party." The manifesto of which we speak did not require the signature of Mr Gladstone to indicate that it was the work of that eminent statesman. No other living man could have placed before the country views upon all the great questions of the day which leave it perfectly open to him to take any course he pleases upon any one of those questions, without being accused of departure from the principles which he has enunciated in this remarkable document. No other living man could have so cleverly concealed his real opinions upon these questions; and we may add that no other would have required twenty-three pages of printed matter in making the attempt. The production is characteristic of the man, but whether it will serve its purpose is a problem yet to be solved. The character, abilities, and long public services of Mr Gladstone doubtless command a widespread admiration among his

countrymen; and the lower orders have been of late years frequently and diligently informed that, in some inscrutable way, he is emphatically the champion of the people. It is perfectly true that the assumption is one which rests upon no foundation whatever, is susceptible of no proof, and is in fact nothing more than a partisan war-cry raised for the purpose of exciting a fictitious enthusiasm in favour of a party leader. Mr Gladstone doubtless desires the welfare of the masses of his fellow-countrymen in the same manner that every other British statesman who is worthy of the name may be credited with that desire; but it would be difficult to point out any special legislation which he has initiated for their benefit, or any valid reason which exists for placing him above others in the category of those public servants who "love the people." It remains to be seen whether this sedulously cultivated popularity among the "masses," and the respect felt for the age and position of Mr Gladstone, will at the present moment outweigh the predilection of our countrymen for a clear and straightforward declaration of policy such as they certainly had a right to expect from the leader of a great party at this juncture, and of the absence of which they have certainly a right to complain. In a speech delivered about a month ago in Dorsetshire, Sir William Harcourt, sneering at Lord Iddesleigh for a supposed vagueness of opinion, remarked with some bitterness, "Is it not the business of a responsible statesman to *know what he thinks and to tell people what he thinks on these subjects?*" We may well say to Mr Gladstone, "*Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.*" Upon hardly one subject is this

manifesto clear and explicit. If Mr Gladstone "knows what he thinks," he certainly conceals his knowledge with rare ingenuity in this wonderful production. Its first eleven pages are occupied with a retrospective view of the events which have occurred since the last general election, or rather with a fanciful colouring of those events, so that their real truth and significance may be overlooked or mistaken by those who read. It is not our purpose to dwell here at length upon this part of the precious document which we have under consideration. Suffice it to allude to two prominent misrepresentations which should be exposed from one end of the country to the other. Speaking of South African affairs, Mr Gladstone, as in his last Mid-Lothian campaign, throws facts to the winds with a splendid audacity, and justifies the conduct of his Government by the most flagrant disregard of historical truth. He calmly states of the Transvaal that "*we had there effected, in violation of our pledges, and in defiance of the fully declared wishes of the people, a forcible incorporation with the empire of an independent European republic, whose inhabitants were resolutely determined to be free.*" This is a just sequel to his words in Mid-Lothian: "*We told you that, in our judgment, the attempt of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration to put down the people of the Transvaal, to extinguish their freedom, and annex them to England, was scandalous and disastrous.*" What is the truth? The Sand River Convention of 1852, by which we undertook to allow the Transvaal Boers to govern themselves independently of Great Britain, contained, *inter alia*, a proviso that *no slavery should be permitted among them.*

An overwhelming mass of evidence, printed in the Blue-books, proved that this proviso had been broken over and over again; and the natives were so cruelly treated by the Boers, that a state of irritation and hostility existed which was highly dangerous to the adjoining British settlements. In 1877 the state of affairs had become critical. The Boers were in a state of bankruptcy; there was only the sum of 12s. 6d. in their exchequer; they had been defeated by the chief Sikokuni, and between him and the Zulus they were threatened with extermination. To save them from this, and the whole country from a war of races, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, having entered the Transvaal with the imposing force of twenty-five native policemen, declared the country annexed to Great Britain. The only colourable pretext for Mr Gladstone's statement as to the "*fully declared wishes of the people*" is that the President, Burghers, made a formal protest at the time. But this very President, in a warning speech in the Boer Parliament a few days before, had told them that it was "*impossible*" that Great Britain could permit the anarchy and confusion which they were in to continue on the borders of her colonies; and, so far from opposition, numerous addresses praying for annexation to England were presented to Sir T. Shepstone. It is quite true that there were "*fully declared wishes afterwards*," but when? The chief Sikokuni was destroyed, and the power of the Zulus broken by the British, and *then* the Boers, no longer threatened by these foes, rose in rebellion. Let it be noted, moreover, that the annexation was fully debated in the House of Commons in 1877, and that, whilst Mr Gladstone *never opened his*

mouth or gave a vote upon the question, the Liberal leaders sanctioned the proceeding. Only when, in the autumn of 1879, he was condemning Lord Beaconsfield's policy in every particular, Mr Gladstone discovered how wicked this annexation had been; and his words of encouragement to those rebel Boers, whom he dubbed "patriots," gave so much aid to their proceedings, that it is impossible to discharge him from a heavy share in the responsibility for the disasters and bloodshed which ensued upon their rebellion in 1880.

We have not space to recall attention to the history of the Boer rebellion, culminating in the tragedy of Majuba Hill and the disgraceful peace concluded with rebels actually encamped upon British territory. Suffice it to say that Mr Gladstone again deliberately misrepresents the real facts of the case when he says, "We have been severely condemned because, after supplying military means such as to place beyond doubt the superiority of British power, we refused to prosecute a war of sanguinary subjugation." If Mr Gladstone is really ignorant of the truth, it is high time he should know that he is not the only virtuous person, nor his party the only true Britons who object to wars of "sanguinary subjugation." No one desired any such thing in the Transvaal; but Mr Gladstone goes upon the quiet assumption that because he says that his Government had supplied "military means such as to place beyond doubt the superiority of British power," everybody must at once believe—and did believe at the time—that such was the case. It was no such thing. The Boers believed, and believe to this moment, that they conquered the British, and caricatures were displayed at the time, in which the

British soldiers were depicted as hares flying before the victorious Boers as hounds.

If there was really such a force provided by Mr Gladstone's Government as "to place beyond doubt the superiority of British power," what was the plain duty of the British Minister? There can be but one answer. The Boers should have been summoned to admit that superiority, to lay down their arms, retreat into the territory which they claimed as their own, and surrender for fair trial those who were accused of having planned and perpetrated a foul massacre of British soldiers at Brounker's Sprit when no war had been declared. If the Boers had consented to acknowledge our superiority in this manner, there would have been room for the display of magnanimity and generosity upon our part; and if it had been deemed necessary to cede the Transvaal formally to its Dutch inhabitants, this might have been done under proper and honourable stipulations. But this is what Mr Gladstone's Government did not do. They hastily concluded a treaty with the rebel Boers whilst the latter were in arms upon British territory. They surrendered almost everything—never entered so much as a protest against the Brounker's Sprit massacre—and worst of all, abandoned to the tender mercies of the Boers the native chiefs who, relying upon British promises and British faith, had stood by us in our hour of trouble. If any one doubts the truth of these assertions, let him read the boastful words of Mr Gladstone at Leeds in 1881, declaring that his Government had taken care of the "friendly natives," and contrast with them the words of Mr Forster in the House of Commons complaining of the sufferings of the natives in consequence of having been "friendly,"

and the admission of Lord Derby in March 1883, that the Boers had broken the Convention again and again, and his endeavouring to excuse our abandonment of the unhappy natives. If there be any care for the honour and fair fame of Great Britain among the new electors, surely their votes will not be given to replace in office the men who have so stained the one and lowered the other in this South African episode.

The second among the historical misrepresentations of Mr Gladstone, which alone we have time to notice, is that in which he calmly declares that "every step which we took in Egypt, down to the time of the operations against Arabi Pacha in 1882, was the direct consequence of the agreement with France for reciprocal support, and for the maintenance of a native government, which had been concluded in 1879, before our accession to office." If these words mean anything at all, they are of course intended to signify that this "agreement with France" is responsible for a state of things which gradually brought about that state of confusion which has entailed upon this country so great an expenditure of blood and money. It is, in fact, the old excuse for all the blunders and failures of the late Government—"it is the fault of the wicked Tory Government which preceded us." Unfortunately, however, for Mr Gladstone's consistency, we have before us one of his Leeds speeches in October 1881, in which, whilst declaring that the agreement with France, commonly called the "Dual Control," had its risks, he wished "to give the credit which was due to them to those who had gone before him, that the joint intervention of France and England had been beneficial to Egypt, and that he

had not the least reason to doubt that they would be able to maintain a thoroughly united action." It is a little too much, then, for Mr Gladstone to attempt at this hour of the day to put forward the "Dual Control" as responsible for his Egyptian blunders, which have been mainly, if not altogether, due to the fact of the divided opinions of his own Cabinet, and to that fatal necessity of preserving the "unity of the Liberal party," which has all along obliged him to endeavour to please, at the same time, those who believed that Great Britain had duties and responsibilities to discharge in Egypt, and those who thought that she had no business there at all, and only desired to "scuttle out" of the country with all possible haste. If Mr Gladstone is of opinion that, instead of consenting to "joint action" with France, Lord Beaconsfield's Government should have refused any such proposal, and treated our neighbour and ally with indifference or contempt, his argument is intelligible, though it is somewhat late to advance it, and entirely inconsistent with his language at Leeds. If he is not of that opinion, his back-handed blow at the "Dual Control" is unreasonable and unhandsome; whilst even by his own showing, he and his Government are solely responsible for all that has occurred since those "operations against Arabi Pacha in 1882," which were undoubtedly their own, and for which no blame can be attributed to their successors. Moreover, if, as he tells us, the French were "within their right" in refusing to go forward at the time of these operations, it is undeniable that Great Britain would have been equally "within her right" in doing the same; so that, whether they were rightly or wrongly undertaken, the

responsibility rests entirely upon Mr Gladstone and his colleagues. Melancholy, indeed, is the subsequent history of the Gladstonian proceedings in Egypt. The slaughter of the Egyptian army (by way, we must suppose, of establishing and strengthening the Egyptian Government); the failure either to strengthen Hicks Pacha's army or to prevent its march and consequent massacre; the blood of Arabs poured out like water upon their own soil; and last, not least, the cruel treatment of Gordon, and the miserable procrastination and delay which caused the death of that Christian hero and the loss of the city which he has for ever identified with his own glorious name,—these are events which cannot but have sunk deep into the hearts of all who are not absorbed in party ties, and deaf to all but party considerations. Will they be forgotten by the new electorate?

But, passing from the historical misrepresentations of this marvellous manifesto, what shall we say of the manner in which, to use his own words, Mr Gladstone in his last twelve pages treats "domestic affairs in a prospective light"? It is not light, indeed, but a hazy fog which this eminent statesman casts around the affairs upon which he deigns to give us his views. Dealing first with parliamentary procedure, he makes a general statement as to the manner in which the "machinery of the House of Commons" has failed to prevent a congestion of business; and entirely ignoring the fact that he has himself tried and failed satisfactorily to amend that machinery, simply commits himself to the general statement that it ought to be amended and the "procedure" reformed. Surely the electors will be of opinion that

where one workman has signally failed, common prudence would suggest the employment of another, and that upon this question at least it is desirable that the Conservative Government should have the opportunity of trying its hand?

With regard to local government, of which Mr Gladstone next treats, we are told that "it is involved in great intricacy of financial and administrative detail;" a sneer is bestowed upon the endeavours of the "Tory party" to lighten local burdens by throwing upon the Consolidated Fund such of these as are not really so much of local as of imperial interest; and whilst it is laid down that local management should be "thoroughly representative and free," a compliment is paid to "the gentry" for their hitherto "upright and intelligent discharge of local duty," and a belief expressed that they will be allowed to retain their position "when our system shall have been placed throughout under effective public control." How far this is likely will perhaps depend upon the amount of belief which the classes who will probably exercise this control may place in the statements of Mr Chamberlain, that "the gentry" have been oppressing and keeping them down from time immemorial. But whatever may be the practical outcome of Mr Gladstone's suggestions,—whether the powers hitherto delegated to magistrates from the Crown are in future to be bestowed by popular suffrage, or by what peculiar process "local administration" is to be brought to completion and perfection,—it must be allowed that Mr Gladstone has committed himself only to generalities, and that his views upon local government may, so far as they are contained in his manifesto,

be made suitable to Conservative as well as to Liberal candidates.

Next comes the great question of land, and upon this Mr Gladstone is enigmatical as usual. He reminds us that he belongs "to a school which has much faith in economic laws" (which his Irish legislation would have led us to doubt), and declares that he desires "to maintain freedom of bequest and to establish freedom of possession." He is prepared—exactly as everybody else is prepared—to "deal freely" with the transfer, registration, and taxation of land, and the "custom of primogeniture"; and after expressing an opinion in favour of a "large extension of the numbers" of the possessors in land, becomes evidently alarmed lest he should be thought to be giving in his adhesion to Mr Chamberlain's proposal to take and allot land compulsorily, and therefore hastens to assure us that "he believes" that the "fundamental principles which make property secure will be upheld among us, whether in the near or the more distant future, with the same courage and integrity as will our liberties, of which, indeed, they form an essential part." Lord Hartington, Mr Goschen, and others who have denounced Mr Chamberlain's land-confiscation schemes, may probably be satisfied, and rely upon the last sentence of their great leader; but it is obvious that he leaves himself entirely unfettered upon the land question, and that no one who supports the Liberal party upon this manifesto will have reason to complain if he finds that party, whether led at the moment by Mr Gladstone or any one else, following or even exceeding Mr Chamberlain's programme.

Registration is the fourth subject upon which Mr Gladstone

professes that the Liberal party is ready to deal; but as there is apparently nothing in this subject calculated to excite controversy, it is not apparent why it should have been placed so conspicuously in the front rank. We have shown that with regard to none of his four subjects does Mr Gladstone propose anything definite; and it is therefore curious at least that he should tell us that they have all "reached a state of maturity," and that the Liberal party is "generally and firmly united" upon them. The latter assertion is certainly the reverse of correct as far as concerns "land" and "local administration"; and we leave Mr Gladstone to reconcile it with the various and conflicting speeches of his late colleagues during the present electioneering campaign.

But, after all, it is the latter pages of Mr Gladstone's manifesto which are the most important. We pass by his description of the "condition and structure of the Liberal party," with the sole remark, that to claim for the "Liberal party" that it is their agency which has made Great Britain what she is, is to ignore history, and to cast into the shade the efforts of noble and philanthropic statesmen, for the petty purpose of exalting a party for electioneering objects. Both parties are patriotic—each has had its share in attempting useful legislation; and to claim for one or the other a monopoly of good intentions or useful performances, is unworthy of a British statesman. And when Mr Gladstone complains that his opponents perpetually call attention to the "views of our most advanced sections" at the present time, he must remember that it is because those views are daily acquiring strength and power in the "Liberal

party," and that nothing has shown the necessity of such action on the part of his "opponents" more than his own manifesto, admitting as it does and to a great extent encouraging those very views, which constitute no mere differences in detail, but such fundamental divergence of principle as to render it impossible that those who hold and those who repudiate them can honestly remain members of the same political party. As an exemplification of what we here allege, let us take the three great subjects upon which Mr Gladstone admits that the Liberal party is not agreed, but which he nevertheless thinks need by no means disturb or imperil their "unity": 1. Changes in the House of Lords; 2. Established Church; 3. Gratuitous education. If it be, as it doubtless is, true that there are divisions in the Liberal camp upon these three questions, surely it is the duty of an honest and conscientious statesman, who aspires to guide public opinion, to declare his own views, and indicate the course which electors should take, who have to decide between candidates professing different views. Instead of this, Mr Gladstone deliberately leaves his own views in doubt, and discusses the three questions in such a manner as to leave his future liberty of action perfectly unfettered. We may gather, indeed, from his allusion to the "reconstitution"—and not the abolition—of the House of Lords, and his wish that "a reasonable share of power should be allowed to the principle of birth," that he is still in favour of the existence of "a second chamber," wherein he is fortunate in being at one with Lord Hartington, Mr Goschen, and Mr Childers, and so unhappy as to differ from Sir Charles Dilke and Mr Chamberlain. He falls short,

so far, of the ideas and wishes of his "advanced section"; but at the same time he "certainly cannot deny that there is a case sufficient to justify important change" in the constitution of the House of Lords. And what is remarkable in the manifesto of any statesman professing attachment to our constitution, he says not one word of the connection between the monarchy and the peerage, or of that right of bestowing rank, which is one of the few powers left to the Crown, and an infringement of which, by the introduction of the elective element, cannot be introduced without another blow at the monarchical part of the British constitution, and another diminution of the prerogative of royalty.

The way in which Mr Gladstone deals with the Established Church would really be deemed absurd in the case of any less eminent man. He tells us that "*it is obvious that so vast a question*" as its severance from the State "*cannot become practical until it shall have grown familiar to the public mind by thorough discussion; with the further condition that the proposal, when thoroughly discussed, shall be approved.*" The disestablishment of the Church cannot become practical until it has been thoroughly discussed and *the proposal shall be approved!* Certainly no "proposal" to disestablish the Church will be carried unless it is "approved" by Parliament, which we must suppose Mr Gladstone to mean; but such a proposal may be "approved" by the majority of a Radical Parliament, in which case it would become "practical" beyond doubt. What the country has a right to know, and what the electors should insist upon knowing before they accept Mr Gladstone's manifesto, is whether or not Mr

Gladstone approves or disapproves of the principle of an Established Church? It is but cold comfort he gives us in his following words, to the effect that the change could not arise "in a country such as ours, except *with a large observance of the principles of equity and liberality, as well as with the general consent of the nation*"!! Then, having pointed out difficulties in the way of disestablishment which may induce the friends of the Church to accept his manifesto as that of a friend, Mr Gladstone goes on to point out with a marked emphasis, "the vast and ever-increasing development" of the Church's "powers of voluntary support," and the increase instead of decrease of "her spiritual and social strength" which have followed past "abridgments of her prerogatives as an Establishment;" and concludes with an expression of his strong conviction that, "*if this great modification of our inherited institutions shall hereafter be accomplished, the vitality of the Church of England will be found equal to all the needs of the occasion.*" If Churchmen doubt the effect which such words as these from Mr Gladstone have had upon the policy of the Liberal party, let them turn to the proceedings of the "National Liberal Federation Conference" at Bradford, on the 1st October, when an amendment to postpone making the question an issue at the coming election having failed to find a seconder, it was unanimously resolved "that this meeting desires to express its conviction that the disestablishment and disendowment of the English, Welsh, and Scotch Churches are urgently demanded, in order finally to establish the only equitable relationship between the State and all forms of religious belief." Such are the results of

the vague words of Mr Gladstone upon a subject of great and vital importance to the community; and it is interesting to note that his late colleagues are again divided in opinion upon this subject. Mr Childers is the only member of the late Cabinet who has had the courage to speak out boldly against the principle of Disestablishment, to which Lord Derby seems to have given his practical adhesion; but Sir C. Dilke and Mr Chamberlain on the same side, may be probably paired against Lord Hartington and Mr Goschen on the other.

Upon the third great subject—that of "gratuitous education"—it is unnecessary for us to dwell, seeing that Mr Gladstone is unusually explicit. He tells us, indeed, in one sentence, that "*there are obvious arguments in favour of the plan,*" and in the next, that "*it appears to suggest some difficulties which demand at any rate a grave consideration.*" Explicit, however, he is, in stating in so many words that which he has left us to gather from his conflicting statements upon the two other subjects, namely, that he "desires to reserve a final judgment"! This being the case, it is useless to follow Mr Gladstone into the argument concerning the relative value attached to education by those who pay and those who do not pay for it, to point out the enormous increase of rates which must follow the adoption of the plan of "free education," or to inquire how far the nation is prepared for that divorce of religious teaching from primary education which is contemplated by our Radical advisers. Suffice it to repeat that upon these three subjects, as indeed upon almost every other question of the future with which Mr Gladstone deals, he leaves us uninformed as to the views which

he recommends for adoption by the party which he still leads.

Lord Rosebery, in a recent speech at Reigate, referred to this manifesto as "almost a judicial utterance." We should rather compare it to the opinion of a jury about to be discharged because they could not agree upon their verdict. Everybody may interpret it according to his own individual wish. It affords to wavering "moderate" Liberals an excuse to adhere to their party, by judiciously concealing from them the fact that, in so doing, they must in reality abandon their principles. For, day by day, it is becoming as clear as daylight that Mr Goschen in vain terms Lord Hartington the "heir-apparent to the leadership" of the Liberal party. Mr Chamberlain has boldly stepped in before him, and that simply because he has enunciated a definite policy, which, until it has been thoroughly exposed, has an attractive ring about it which delights the noisiest and most "advanced" of the Liberal party.

The duty, then, of the new electorate, and, indeed, of the old as well as new voters, appears to us to be clearly indicated by the condition of public affairs and the position of political parties at this moment. Those who desire moderate reforms and progressive improvement within the limits of our free constitution need be under no apprehension that such will be delayed. There is no political organisation of appreciable strength which has either the will or the power to resist such alterations as may from time to time be reasonably demanded by the popular will. There is a far greater danger to be apprehended—namely, that those to whom we allude as being desirous to move forward upon constitutional lines may be persuaded to cast in their lot with those whose ultimate in-

tention is to subvert the constitution. We have already called attention to the cuckoo cry of the latter at the present moment, "Preserve at all hazards the unity of the Liberal party." For this purpose, or, in other words, to secure a majority for the Liberal leaders, every project or doctrine which might scare from the fold the "moderate" Liberals is either to be sedulously kept in the background, or at least to be treated as "an open question." But surely this net will be vainly set in sight of the electoral bird? The sacrifice to party allegiance which is demanded of Liberal electors is too great to be yielded, unless, indeed, all the old watchwords and principles of Liberalism are to be thrown to the winds and forgotten, for the one sole purpose of bringing back to office men who have only quitted it because they differed so greatly the one from the other that harmonious working together had become an impossibility. Are we to have men in the same Cabinet of whom one is not prepared to disestablish the National Church, while another considers an Established Church to be opposed to the principles of civil and religious liberty? Are we to be governed by men who differ as widely as Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain upon that land question which must perforce come early for discussion in the new Parliament? Are we, in short, to be governed, not by principles, but by a Ministry which avowedly proposes to lay aside all such inconvenient encumbrances, and to make its one sole guide and object the policy, be it what it may, which at the moment seems best calculated to preserve the unity of its followers and the compactness of its majority? Do not let "moderate" Liberals be deceived into the belief that they can restrain the action of

the more advanced members of their party by remaining within its ranks. There has never been and will never be an instance of the success of such a project. The advanced section—that is, the Radical party (to whom, be it noted, Mr Chamberlain has more than once referred to as being the party to which he belonged, as clearly to be distinguished from the “moderate” Liberals)—have their definite objects, and move forward resolutely to their completion. This party received their first great impulse during Mr Gladstone’s last Administration, because, ostensibly to satisfy them and as a tribute to their importance to his party, the Prime Minister placed in the Cabinet Mr Chamberlain—a four-year-old member of Parliament, who had never before held office, and whose sole claim was his affinity to the extreme section of the Liberal party. Sir Charles Dilke subsequently joined the Cabinet as another representative of the same section, and its influence in the Gladstone Cabinet gave it a position in the country which it would otherwise probably not have attained.

Steadily advancing towards its objects, the one great desire of this party at the present moment is to drag behind it and unite at the polls that great mass of moderate opinion at which its leaders scoff when it suits them so to do, but which it is just now their object to conciliate and cajole. But will they make the smallest concession to “moderate” views when once their majority has been obtained? The man who believes it must indeed be of a credulous disposition. The moderate politicians who secure the Radical triumph at the polls—if indeed they are not too wise to fall into the trap—will afterwards find that they have

given strength, position, and influence to men whose views and wishes are far more opposite to their own than those of the Conservative party. Their character, their moderation, their ability, if employed at this moment on behalf of the Liberal party, will, if successful at the polls, avail them less than nothing in any attempt hereafter to check the current of Radical legislation. If the rights of property are swept away, and the security of property destroyed—if the National Church is disestablished, and, as a certain consequence, the bitterness of religious and sectarian differences multiplied tenfold throughout the country—if the honour of Great Britain is again imperilled abroad and her plighted faith disregarded, whilst at home her most cherished institutions are invaded and the very fabric of her constitution rudely shaken,—it will be in vain that “moderate” Liberals repent of the action which will have rendered possible such calamities.

The mischief which lurks in the future has been clearly shown to them; the warning has been given. Will it have been in vain? It is not yet too late. Let those who love the monarchy and who recognise the value of the free institutions which, under the shadow of Church and Crown, have grown up amongst us, pause and take courage to place principle before party. No retrograde policy is possible on the part of any Government to-day. But whilst you may liberalise the Conservatives, you will never moderate the Radical party. And wherein lies the greatest danger to the State—in the delay, or in the hastening, of constitutional changes? Can any man doubt? The delay of one, two, five years is as nothing in the history of a country; and a reform thus de-

layed may, and probably will, be better thought out and matured on account of that very delay. On the other hand, too much haste in altering laws which have been the growth of centuries may easily work an irremediable mischief to the country which undergoes the change. Hasty and ill-considered legislation is certainly at this moment a greater danger to us than its converse.

We have pointed out reasons connected with the circumstances under which Lord Salisbury assumed office, which appear to us to give his Government some claim to a fair trial. We have, moreover, called attention to the fact that, since their accession to office, the members of the present Ministry have shown a vigour and capacity which do not unfavourably contrast with the measure of such qualities evinced by their predecessors. But our appeal to the new and old electorate is based upon still higher grounds. The Liberal party, as we have shown, are not the advocates and exponents of the principles for which, as Liberals, the giant reformers of the early part of this century fought and conquered. Theirs is a spurious Liberalism of a dangerous and socialistic character, which discards the great Liberal doctrine of individual freedom and self-reliance, and falls back upon an idea of State subsidy, State supervision, and State support, which must infallibly sap the liberty, minimise the self-reliance, and destroy the independence of the people. Apart from and beyond this, the Liberal, or rather Radical, party—for such is their proper designation—have no sound, definite policy to offer us,—no tangible or legible motto upon the

banner which they plant before our eyes. One man will vote for the Radical candidate, because Mr Gladstone is going to lead the party again; and, with Mr Gladstone at the helm, the extreme section, forsooth, will be restrained. A second man will vote the same way, because Lord Hartington is still with the party; and what danger can there be to property from a party of which the heir of the house of Cavendish is one of the leaders? A third man will support the Radicals, because he believes in Dilke and Chamberlain, and is confident that neither Gladstone nor Hartington nor any one else can restrain them, or prevent their Radical doctrines being accepted as those which are to rule and guide the Liberal party of the future. Probably our third man is right; but what will the new electorate think of it? Will they not be wise if they reason thus?—Here is a party greatly divided within itself. Let it finally settle upon its own leaders and its own programme before we again intrust it with the reins of power. And while it is engaged in settling the principles upon which it will hereafter demand our confidence, let us give that confidence to those Conservative statesmen who, forced by the internal differences of their opponents to take office at a moment undesirable for the interests of their party, boldly accepted the responsibility, have fairly, honourably, and vigorously set to work to steer the good ship clear from the rocks and wide of the quicksands to which she had been driven by their predecessors, and have established a strong claim for that fair trial which alone they now ask of their countrymen.

THE CRACK OF DOOM.—PART IV.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE must leave the adventurous Count for a time, to tell about a little incident that happened to his sister, Mrs Darby Rorke, on her way home from the studio in Bloomsbury. She lived, it may be remembered, in Kensington, and it was her intention to walk along Oxford Street and home across the Park. She met an old acquaintance by the way.

The approaching end of the world had been received so far with great equanimity by everybody to whom the news had been communicated. But on Mrs Rorke, disturbed by her brother's sudden appearance as a low adventurer, threatening to bring disgrace on a life already sufficiently joyless, the prospect produced a strange effect. She was in a more impressionable mood. The Professor's talk about cosmic catastrophes had really excited her imagination, and as she walked quickly along one of the busiest streets in the busiest city in the world, reflecting bitterly on her new anxiety, she suddenly found herself transported above all her troubles with a strange ecstasy.

"Is there any real danger in the comet?" she had asked, listlessly. "I wish I could believe it," she said to herself now, with a sudden burst of passionate impatience of the petty and shameful troubles of her life. To be extinguished in the crash of worlds! What an escape! What a relief! She yielded herself with passive delight to the ecstasy of this dream. All the objects of her waking senses mingled with it and were transfigured. The roar of Oxford Street

as she walked along, sounded in her ears like a sublime hymn coming from the vast depths of space. Her mental horizon expanded as if by miracle, lifted to infinite heights; the whirl and sweep of the great spheres seemed to come within the range of her consciousness—she seemed to see and hear them rushing onwards in their endless and aimless motion. Simultaneously, the hurrying, sauntering throng dwindled. She seemed to be aware of them suddenly, in a strange and unfamiliar light, as curious pieces of senseless unthinking mechanism. All the life had suddenly gone out of them; they produced on her none of that indescribable excitement awakened by the presence of a human being; her own body, dwindled and dried to inanimate hardness like the rest, seemed to avoid them mechanically of its own accord, without any impulse from herself. And yet every outline of dress and face and figure, the fixed houses and the moving vehicles, every patch of colour, was visible to her with extraordinary distinctness.

She was too much under the spell of this freak of the imagination to experience any quickening of human feeling when one of the automata, crossing the street in front of her with a look of recognition in his eyes, seemed to wish to speak to her. She gazed at him with fixed scrutiny, as if he were an inanimate object. He had crossed from Edgeware Road towards the Marble Arch, and intercepted her as she was about to turn into the Park. The face was familiar to her, and yet it was not

the face of a present acquaintance. She traced a likeness to Hugh Millerby, and this impression was confirmed by the tones of the voice when he lifted his hat and spoke.

"Can I be mistaken? Do you remember me, Stephen Millerby?"

She was face to face with a man who had made love to her and asked her to marry him many years before, when she was a girl of seventeen and he was an undergraduate at Cambridge. She had hardly ever thought of the incident since. She had thought little of it at the time. So little importance did she attach to it, that she had considered it no objection to her accepting, along with her mother, the invitation to Hardhill. This invitation had been of her mother's procuring. For reasons into which we may afterwards inquire, that eccentric worthy had fished for it; and it had not occurred to Mrs Rorke, in acquiescing, that there would be any impropriety in her staying, on a semi-public occasion, with the family of a man who had been an unsuccessful suitor. It was so long ago, and there had been so little in common between them—between her with all her sensibilities profoundly awakened by literature, and him with all his powers wrapped up in the abstrusenesses of the higher mathematics, and nothing but undergraduate gossip for small-talk. She had looked upon him simply as a boy of friendly disposition, and laughed at the time over his heroic determination to live single for her sake as a boyish fancy. If she had remembered the incident when Mrs Millerby invited them to Hardhill, it was only to suppose that the reminiscence would amuse him as it amused herself.

But now that she was face to face with him, there was something in his manner which told

her at once that the old times were not so much a matter of light indifference to him. A tenderness had leapt into his eyes at the sight of her, and he struggled in vain to suppress the treacherous tones of his voice, and recall himself to her remembrance as if they had never been anything more than ordinary acquaintances.

She read these signs that the boy's love had been deeper than she had supposed, and put the right interpretation on them; but it struck her, in her present mood, simply as a strange fact in natural history might have done. She was conscious of no responsibility for the conduct of her former self. She felt neither a woman's pride nor a woman's remorse. Her feeling was one of simple surprise as she asked—

"But have you not forgotten me?"

The frank surprise of the question dispelled his embarrassing sentiment and put him more at his ease. It was quite clear she had no tender memories of him. He smiled and obtained her tacit consent to conduct her across the drive into the Park. When they were sufficiently far from the rattle to make it possible to converse, he said in as indifferent a tone as he could command—

"Did you think, then, it was so easy to forget you?"

But by this time the indiscretion of her own question had struck her, and she had had time also to feel a certain thrill of pleasure at the respectful tenderness of the old lover's greeting. The strange ecstasy into which she had been lifted seemed to die away with the overpowering roar of the thoroughfare, but it left her in a very hysterical state. She was conscious of her own weakness, and bit her lip with vexation at her folly in having

given this old friend an opening for tender conversation.

"It is so long ago," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"To-day it seems to me only yesterday. But," he continued, in a lighter tone, when he saw a look of pain come into her face at this speech, "you have been all over the world since then, and have become famous; while I——"

"I heard your name mentioned this afternoon. You have discovered a comet, it seems. I have just been talking with Professor Quickset about it."

"That accounts for my missing him. I have just been at his house about this same comet, and other British Association business. By the way, I am very glad to hear that you are coming to the meeting. I think you will like my mother, and I am sure you will find the whole thing enjoyable."

Objections were now apparent to her that had not been visible before, and she thought it as well now to leave the way open for a retreat. "It is very good of Mrs Millerby to ask us. I am sure I should enjoy it, but I am afraid I may not be able to leave London then. That fame of mine which you speak of, keeps me very busy," she added, with a weary smile.

"But you can write there as well as here, if not better. We will not keep our lioness on show all the time. She shall have a cage to which she can retreat when she pleases. Besides, you must see this great comet from Hardhill. I look on my observatory as being quite its native heath."

"It must be a very pleasant diversion for you, this observatory," said she, beginning, in her novelist's way, to sketch out in her

mind his scheme of life. In this scheme the element of romance was supplied by his worship of his boyish love; and perhaps, as she imagined how he lived, a suspicion that it might be so, crossed her woman's heart: but she was not in a mood to derive anything but a very mixed pleasure from the reflection.

"I am afraid it is nothing better," said he, with a laugh; "and yet it was not intended for a plaything by my father."

"Is he very severely scientific?"

"Well, no. I can hardly describe him as scientific. But he had something in view much more serious than mere scientific curiosity."

"How so?"

"He will tell you when you see him, no doubt. He is a very simple man, my father—a very good man. You will find him quite worth studying. How is Mrs Brockley?" he continued, after a pause. "I ought to have asked for her before now."

"It is not difficult to trace the connection of your ideas," she answered, good-naturedly. "My mother is very well, and not in the least changed."

"She and my father will have a great deal to say to one another." The prospect amused him, and Mrs Rorke, in spite of her dejection, could not help picturing those two together. "And how is your brother Tom? He used to be a bright little fellow." He looked across the Park as he spoke, to where a group of children were playing, and remembered how he used to take the little fellow out for a row on the Cam, and how delighted he was with the dignity of acting as "cox."

Mrs Rorke did not immediately reply, and turning, he was startled to see her lip trembling and tears in her eyes. "Surely he is not

dead?" he cried, with sudden concern. "How very stupid of me to put such a question!"

A seat was near, and she said she would like to sit down for a minute. But as soon as she was seated, she began to sob hysterically.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "what a fool I am!"

"I shall be better presently," she sobbed, hiding her face from him with her parasol.

It is an embarrassing situation to have on your hands a woman struggling with a hysterical fit, when you are not quite certain of the cause, and are unable to suggest soothing topics, and your relations do not admit of the adoption of strong measures. It is not the less embarrassing when the incident occurs in a public park. Stephen Millerby was ashamed to fly, though it did occur to him in the confusion of the moment that this might be the kindest course; but he was desperately perplexed to know what to do, if he stayed. He could only ejaculate against his own stupidity; and indeed it is rather a foolish thing to ask people abruptly about their near relations when you meet them after an interval of thirteen years.

"How I hate myself for being such a fool! Can you forgive me?"

"It is not your fault," she said, with a vain attempt at a smile, ending in another spasmodic catch of the breath. "I am not very well to-day." As she felt for her handkerchief, the parasol almost dropped from her trembling hand.

"I can never forgive myself," exclaimed the remorseful blunderer, as he caught the parasol.

Her eyes were flashing now with anger at her own weakness,

and resolution to quell it; but Stephen's self-reproaches and earnest kindness almost unnerved her again. By degrees, however, the clouds were chased from her face by the effort of a strong will.

Stephen could have thrown himself at the feet of his saint when he saw the flag of victory displayed in radiant eyes and smiling features. The sight of those whom we have loved in our youth, and whose memory we have worshipped, is often disenchanting. It was not so in this case. He found her ten times more beautiful and more worthy to be admired than he had ever dreamt, and remorse for his own offence intensified the fervour of his worship. He had truly remained single for her sake, and all the pent-up feelings of years seemed to break their bounds and flood his whole being at that moment. There was not an unworthy thought in his heart. It was the love of a devotee for an idolised saint.

She was herself again. She started up lightly from the seat, radiant, almost gay. "I don't think," she said, "I can let you come any farther with me. You are not used to such painful exhibitions. We women are weak creatures. I assure you it was against my will."

But he respectfully insisted. "I am but a weak man, and I see that I can be of no use; but I would rather not leave you, unless you positively order me. Will you sit here while I get a cab?"

"Oh no, thank you. I can walk easily enough. You may come a little farther, if you are not afraid of a repetition of the scene. You hate scenes, don't you?"

"When I can do nothing but stand by like a helpless fool, I confess that I do. I feel some-

how that my conduct was not equal to the occasion."

"What could you do? Bite my hand, as I once saw Toole do in similar circumstances on the stage?"

He laughed, but his face subsided into an expression which told plainly enough that he could not regard the scene as a farce.

He had reason to congratulate himself on having been allowed to walk all the way; for Mrs Brockley gave him a warm welcome, and suggested that he should come to lunch next day, and take them to see the Grosvenor Gallery, to which she wished to make a farewell visit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The gentle reader may perhaps at this stage begin to fear that our story threatens to become sentimental, as we have already two pairs of lovers in hand, or at least two lovers in not very hopeful search of mates, and one of the desired partners of affection already a married woman. But there is no need for fear. Sentiment is not our business, but the patchwork of life as it is. We must deal with sentiment when it turns up as one of the chances of that life. We must recognise it as a fact, and proceed to tell how the pretended Count Ramassy fell desperately in love with Grace Quickset, not of his own free-will and deliberate calculation, but with a sentiment as honest and irresistible, if not as honourable, as if he had been what he pretended to be, or had not been a pretender at all, but only a poor ambitious family tutor.

Let it not be supposed that this is any disgrace to the noble passion. Love is as impartial as death in its choice of a lodging. It has vulgar tastes. It masquerades in all habits. It is as insatiable as science in its experimental curiosity, and much more cruel and callous in its experiments. Why should it not test its power to elevate and purify on the person of this reckless adventurer? It did him good on the whole; and if

others suffered through the experiment—well, that often happens with experiments, whether they succeed in their primary object or not.

Miss Douglas said afterwards that Quickset himself was much to blame; that he was fairly dazzled by the Count; that he coveted an alliance with the interesting nobleman, and threw his daughter deliberately in the Count's way. The invitation to look for the comet, according to that cynical young lady, was simply a trap such as might be laid by a match-making mother. She scoffed at the idea that it was only women who practised such little arts.

Therein she did injustice to the man of science. The truth was, that he had already a husband for Grace in his eye; and he was so persuaded that Mr Adam Napier was the best conceivable husband, that he could hardly entertain the idea of her choice falling on anybody else. Young Napier was not much to look at, not much of a girl's romantic hero in appearance; but he was a first-rate young fellow of good sterling stuff, steady, industrious, affectionate, of brilliant ability, of good family, his occupation in life settled, his standing already eminent. And in his steady, honest, constant, quiet way, he was deeply in love with Grace. He had told her father so, and the father had advised him not to declare himself

just yet. There may have been a little selfishness in this, for Quickset was very fond of his daughter, and wished to postpone the evil day when he should have to part with the light of his house. But there was also paternal prudence. He did not wish to force his daughter's inclinations. He felt sure that she would agree with him in the end. Of this he was as calmly convinced as of the return of summer after spring. Only nature must not be hurried. Adam Napier would be her husband. That was settled. It would come in time. But there was no hurry.

When Quickset spoke of Grace's helping the Count to look for the comet, such a thought as the suspicious satirist attributed to him never crossed his mind. He meant merely to convey that looking for a comet was a very simple operation. It was not in his thoughts that the two should be sent up to the observatory to look for the comet together; but even if this idea had presented itself, he would not have apprehended any danger to his daughter's peace of mind as a likely result. If he had thought of the Count as a possible son-in-law, he would have been much more reserved in his conversation with that gentleman, and much more cautious about inviting him to his house. As it was, he simply took the Count as he appeared—a distinguished foreign visitor, with commendable scientific tastes, an ardent benevolence very pleasing and attractive in one so young, and a frank homage for an established authority like himself that was also very engaging in a young man. It is not every day that we meet a new acquaintance with so many claims on our esteem, or so good a title to friendly encouragement.

While the Count ran his short career in London, he had many al-

most miraculous escapes from detection. There were men in the Pantheon who could have told Quickset at once, if he had asked them, that there was no such Austrian nobleman as Count Ramassy. But somehow he never did ask them. "Strange that you should never have spoken to me about your wonderful young friend," said a member of the Austrian Embassy afterwards to Quickset. Somehow the occasion never occurred. There actually was in the Junior Pantheon a man who had been at school at Christ's with the pseudo-Count, and who, meeting him in the club one day, conversed with him as Tom Brockley. But it never occurred to him to say to anybody who knew the Count, "That is Tom Brockley;" and it never occurred to any of the Count's acquaintances to say to him, "That is Count Ramassy." Thus the duplicity of the nomenclature escaped discovery.

Quickset felt quite a cordial interest in the deferential and widely informed young man as they drove up together to Ourania House after dining together at the club. There was no want of topics of conversation between them. The Count knew the Professor's subject well, and there were many points on which he could draw out the opinions of the master. His patron being a man of scientific tastes, he had met personally the leading scientific men of Vienna, and could gossip pleasantly about them. There was nothing in his talk to excite the least suspicion that he was different from what he pretended to be.

The way was thus clear for Love to try its little experiment. Danger was asleep.

Grace Quickset was a brunette, with dark gipsy eyes, and her little figure was the perfection

of symmetry and grace. There is in the Louvre, in the Salle des Caryatides, as I remember, on the left hand as you enter, a fragment of a small statue of Flora, for which she might have stood to the sculptor. If that statue had been filled with exuberant life, and given a voice and eyes capable of expressing the very soul of innocent mirth and tender sympathy, an unreserved gaiety with friends, a sweet gravity of mien with strangers, it might have passed for Grace Quickset as the Count had seen her since his arrival in London. He had felt the charm of such a presence, of course. No man could have helped as much as that. But it was not till this evening, when they came up from the club, and found her in the drawing-room alone, and she came running forward in sparkling excitement to show a little discovery to her father, that a deeper feeling began to be awakened.

"Well, Grace," said her father, affectionately, "what is it? Have you been beforehand with us, and found the comet? Come, that's not fair."

"I did try," she admitted, with a merry laugh.

"And you are not ashamed of having stolen a march on us? Is there no conscience in women?"

"I tried as soon as it was dusk; but there were such heaps of clouds that I had no chance, and had to give it up. If I had been a man, I daresay it would have been a clear night. You men have all the chances."

"Well, but what is it? You have evidently discovered something. You needn't attempt to deny it?"

"Only a little poem," she said, handing him an open book—"a curious little poem on the de-

struction of the world. When you were talking this afternoon, I felt sure I had seen something about it somewhere; and I remembered all of a sudden when I was up in the observatory, and have just run down and found it."

Quickset took the book from his daughter, and read aloud:—

"When the world is burning,
Fired within, yet turning
Round with face unscathed;
Ere fierce flames, uprushing,
O'er all lands leap, crushing,
Till earth fall, fire-swathed,—
Up amidst the meadows,
Gently through the shadows,
Gentle flames will glide,
Small and blue and golden:
Though by bard beholden
When in calm dreams folden,
Calm his dreams will bide.

When the dance is sweeping,
Through the greensward peeping,

Shall the soft lights start;
Laughing maids, unstaying,
Dreaming it trick-playing,
High their robes upswaying,
O'er the lights shall dart;
And the woodland haunter
Shall not cease to saunter

When, far down some glade,
Of the great world's burning
One soft flame upturning,
Seems, to his discerning,
Crocus in the shade."

As Quickset read—the rich, musical, measured tones of his voice sounding all the more impressively in the stillness of the room after the rattle of the streets through which they had passed—the Count was suddenly invaded by a new feeling,—an overpowering sense of the peacefulness of this home, and the restful ease and sweetness of the life of its inhabitants. Certain lines which he used to read at school began to beat their cadence fitfully in his ears:—

"No fears to beat away, no strifes to heal,
The past unsighed for, and the future sure."

He thought of his school-days, and of the life on which he had embarked. It was such a contrast. But the reading was over before this feeling had time to get full possession of him. Only the seed had fallen and rooted itself.

"Which means," said the Professor when he had finished, "that nobody will pay any attention even when the great burning is begun. Yes, it is a quaint fancy, and likely enough."

"I think it is very fine," said his daughter. "It makes you think, and then you feel the music of it."

"H-m-m, Ebenezer Jones? I never heard the name before."

"He is not much known, but he has written some very beautiful things," said the Count. He had never heard the name before, but he thought the remark a safe one, and counted on being able to de-

fend it, taking the book from Quickset's hands as if for the purpose.

"Bless me, Count!" said Quickset, turning to him with surprise, "you are omniscient. Well, as the night is cloudy, we had better make the most of our time, and see if we can have better luck than Grace. Shall we go up-stairs?"

The Count handed the book to Miss Quickset with the remark that many minor poets are not so much read as they deserve to be. "Are you coming to help us?" he added, with a smile. But she shook her head and said, "I have had my try; it is only fair that you should have yours now."

He followed Quickset to the observatory, and as he climbed, had to repress with an effort certain pangs of regret that he had ever started in this business, and dismay as he thought what would be the end of it.

CHAPTER XIX.

All was dark in the observatory when Quickset and the Count entered. In the pause before the Professor struck a light, the Count heard the solemn ticking of the clocks, and felt his own heart beating violently.

The ticking came from the corner on the left hand from where they entered, and when the gas was lighted there, the Count was able to make out the arrangement of the large room. Two great round pedestals of solid masonry, some nine feet in diameter, rose to about a man's height above the floor. In answer to the Count's inquiry as to what they rested on, Quickset told him that these pillars were continued upwards from the ground, and that the foundation was a deep, wide bed of solid concrete. An equatorial telescope

was mounted on one of the pedestals, a transit instrument on the other. The massive solidity of the pedestals was necessary to give the requisite stability to these instruments, which were so delicate, and liable to be disturbed by any concussion of the earth, that the Professor had fixed his residence at a distance from any thoroughfare.

The Professor led the way up a side stair to one of these circular platforms—that on which the equatorial was mounted—and threw a little more light on the scene. Above the instrument was a revolvable wooden dome, with an oblong aperture protected by a flap-door. Quickset swung round the dome so that the northern sky should be visible through the aperture, flung open the flap-door, and

looked out. The northern sky was covered with clouds.

"It won't do, I am afraid," he said to the Count. "There is nothing to be seen."

It so happened that this exactly suited the adventurer, who had Stephen Millerby's ephemeris in his pocket, and wished to be left to himself that he might have an opportunity of consulting it. He paused for a moment to consider how to get Quickset out of the way for a little, and after looking at the sky, said—

"I think it will clear by-and-by. What a beautiful instrument!"

He took the cover tenderly and with delicate care off the equatorial, and unclamping the right ascension circle, gave the instrument a loving swing. He was thinking at the moment whose hand had touched it last.

"I see you understand it," the astronomer said, with a smile.

"It is a month since I had one in my hands," the Count said, with well-feigned enthusiasm, if it was feigned. "I should like to have a look through it. I don't mind waiting for an hour or two on the chance of its clearing. But I know you must have something to do, having been out all the afternoon. You can come and send me away if it has not cleared when it is time for you to go to bed."

"Shall I bring you a book?" Quickset had some letters to write, and was not sorry to get off. He was a rigid economist of his time.

"No, thanks. I will smoke a cigar, if you don't mind. The clocks and the instruments are excellent company for me."

When the retreating steps died away, the Count languidly took Millerby's papers from his pocket, made a careful but rapid calculation, set the two circles of the equatorial with exquisite delicacy

of manipulation, and clamped them firmly. Then waiting for the moment he had fixed on, with sure touch at the very instant he connected the instrument with the sidereal clock, and once more breathed freely, his brow relaxing into an expression of serene confidence. If he was right in his figures—and he had perfect trust in his own accuracy—the barrel of the telescope now pointed at the comet, and if the machinery was in good working order, would continue to follow it and keep it in view.

He took another look at the heavens, went slowly down from the platform, lighted his cigar, peered at the star-charts on the walls, and, the confident look on his face gradually changing into gloom, pulled a chair from a corner and sat down. The stillness of the room, but for the solemn ticking, disposed him to melancholy, and for the first time since he crossed the Channel as Count Ramassy, he was sad at heart. The disguise had really been nothing more than a lark at first—a lark on a big scale and of rather a risky kind, but still something that might be so designated. He had not donned the title for any purpose of vulgar swindling. It was purely for the fun of the thing that he wished to pass for a time as a foreign nobleman of scientific tastes. He did not intend to cheat anybody out of anything more substantial than respect for a patent of nobility. He had money enough in his pocket to pay his way during all the time that he intended to masquerade as Count Ramassy. French romances, operating on a disposition naturally vain and ostentatious, were chiefly responsible for the freak. He thought he would like the sensation of figuring as a man of wealth and title.

The scheme had rather grown upon him after his first easy successes. When he introduced himself to Adam Napier as Count Ramassy, the Count was little more than a name even to himself. He left the details of the character to be filled in as occasion and the momentary whim of fancy might suggest. When he crossed the Channel, he had no gifted and beloved wife who had died in giving birth to her first child. The project for reconciling science and religion, her bequest to him on her deathbed, was also an after-thought, as well as the house on the Lake of Como, and the small observatory in Vienna. His scheme, in fact, had taken a much more ambitious range when he found himself in a few days, through the good offices of Adam Napier and Quickset, a temporary member of two clubs, merely on the strength of his title and his interest in science.

Mr Darby Rorke had nothing whatever to do with the imposition. His wife and his mother-in-law were quite wrong in suspecting him. In fact, as it afterwards appeared, he resented it bitterly as an injury to himself. He had really, with a great deal of trouble, obtained the concession from the Austrian Government for working the Bosnia quicksilver-mines. Wishing, for certain reasons, not to come to England himself, he had trusted young Brockley, who proposed coming home to see his relations, with the task of seeing a financial agent about the organisation of a company. And young Brockley had ennobled himself on the way, for reasons entirely unconnected with the enterprise. He was indeed green enough to think that the title might be useful to him in securing influential directors. He

even dreamed of having a bishop on the board, as well as an influential man of science. But this was entirely his own idea.

So far Count Ramassy's plans had prospered amazingly, and he had thoroughly enjoyed his false position, and the excitement of maintaining it by fictions that were easy enough as long as nothing was suspected. But the enjoyment carried in itself the seeds of its own destruction. The fiction was so pleasing that he began to be discontented because it was not reality. And in proportion as his pleasure in it grew, his fears of losing it increased. The awkward encounters with his sister made him uneasy. Miss Douglas's curiosity about Mr Darby Rorke alarmed him. What a nuisance it was to have these relatives about!

As he handled Mr Quickset's instruments, he envied the Professor's secure position and quiet home, and thought again and again of the happy scene down-stairs when Grace gave him such a bright and eager greeting. Why should he not have such a home as that? He would go back to his work and toil honestly for it. But was this possible now after such an escapade? It was true he had done no harm as yet. He had swindled nobody. But what would respectable people say if he confessed that it was only a bit of fun, an experiment on human credulity? Would those whom he had taken in forgive him? Would they help him to make a name for himself in science? And besides name and fame, he had now unfortunately another object. He was in love with Grace Quickset, and the very hopelessness of seeking to win her by any honourable means open to him intensified the ardour of his longing.

Suddenly a happy thought occurred to him, so attractive in its first gleam that he suspended his mechanical operations, and sat down to turn it over. If the news of the comet made a sensation, it would affect the stocks, and he would speculate in the City for a fall, and perhaps make a fortune, and persuade Grace Quickset to marry him or run away with him before his imposture was discovered. This wild scheme, natural enough to a youth whose knowledge of life was derived almost entirely from romances, restored his equanimity and gave him new hopes. He relit the cigar which he had allowed to go out. "I will see Mr Bob Douglas about it to-morrow," he said to himself. "There must be money in that comet." He smiled to think that his first plan in concealing Stephen Millerby's papers had only been to impress his new acquaintances with the idea that he had an observatory.

While he thus mused, he heard a light quick footstep on the stairs, and the door behind him opened. He turned. It was Miss Quickset. "Have you found it?" she cried eagerly, uttering the words that were on her lips before she saw that the Count was alone. When she perceived this fact, she showed a little confusion, and explained, "I thought papa was here."

For a second the Count was almost as much confused as herself. The apparition was unexpected. The opportunity presented for a *tête-à-tête* fairly took his breath away. He could not think how to secure it. "The clouds have been too much for us," he said. "Mr Quickset has gone down to do some work, and left me here to watch."

Grace's instinctive impulse was to retreat when she found that her father was not there. But not

obeying this impulse and running off at once before giving herself time to think, she was obliged to consider how to retreat gracefully. There was an embarrassed earnestness in the Count's manner that startled her. To shut the door and go away without saying anything might show that she was conscious of this, and her instinct revolted against any such awkward indication.

"I shall find him in his study," she said, as if her sole purpose in coming up had been to say good-night to her father and she had no curiosity about the search for the comet. But she could not resist adding, as she turned to go, "It is clearer in the north now." She had observed this before she came up, and it had quickened her curiosity as to the result of the search.

"Is it?" said the Count with some surprise, running lightly up the steps to the platform and looking through the gap in the dome. He had been too busy with his own thoughts to observe that the clouds were passing off.

She could not go away now till he had verified her observation by looking through the telescope, and he took as long over this as he decently could, desperately bent on keeping her if possible. "Why," he said, "it is almost clear now at the very place where I expected to find it. I fear I should have lost all credit as a good observer if you had not come in. I fell into a brown study after setting the instrument, and might have been sitting there for another half-hour while the favourable moment had passed. Won't you come and take a look? There is a little cloud, I am afraid, just at the spot on which I have directed the telescope, but it will pass in a minute or two."

She had a fancy that the foreigner would think it insular prudery

if she refused. So she came in, and looked through the telescope. There was nothing but cloud in the field of vision.

"It will pass in a minute or two," he said. "I should like you to be the first to see the comet."

This was a temptation to her, and she yielded, though not without a certain flutter, for this young man, with his rank, his philanthropic ambition, his command of many languages, with a cloud of premature gravity and sadness thrown over his handsome features by a great sorrow, had not a little impressed her imagination. This impression was much strengthened by her father's respect for his abilities and knowledge. The chord of this respect vibrated in her heart as she remarked the calm confidence with which he seemed to expect to find the comet where he had pointed the telescope.

"But are you sure it is behind that cloud?" she asked.

"You will laugh when I tell you my reason," he said, coming down from the platform.

"Why should I? What is it?"

"You will think me superstitious?"

"That depends. I am not *very* superstitious myself." Quickset, although an agnostic, had encouraged her in his own strong sentiment for the mysterious grandeur of the universe. Mystic poets also had a great charm for her, and she was deeply read in Donne and Herbert. So that perhaps she was more superstitious than she fancied herself, and the disclaimer was really an acknowledgment. Certainly the mere suggestion that the Count had fixed the position of the telescope on an occult principle, gave her a faint thrill of the kind awakened by the thought of the supernatural.

"I will confess to you," said the

Count with a soft smile, after gazing at her gravely for a moment.

"I simply took hold of the telescope with one hand, and, looking up with a strong desire to find the object, waited to see whether I should be conscious of an impulse towards any one spot. It came almost on the instant. I am curious to see whether the impulse was right," he continued, as if sceptical himself. "We often deceive ourselves about these things, —the impulse that we are conscious of being really a rapid judgment on grounds known to us. But this should be a testing case, as I can have nothing to go upon unconsciously, only a general impression that the comet is to be seen somewhere in the northern heavens."

"I wish the cloud would make haste and let us see," she said, keenly interested, but striving to be sceptical. "Do you often decide things in this way?" she asked, in a half-amused tone.

"Often perhaps than I care to confess."

"And are you generally right?"

"Almost always. I can't account for it, but I have never yet been deceived when I was able without distraction to lose my own will, as it were, and make myself a part of the world without—and around. But don't," he continued, with a forced smile, "say anything to Mr Quickset about my mode of looking for a comet, if I should prove to be right. Men of science are apt to laugh at such things."

"But they ought not to laugh, if the facts are clear, and they can't account for them."

"There generally is, however, some sort of way of accounting for them. It might be said, for instance, that I saw the position of the comet in Mr Millerby's ephemer-

eris, and that I was guided by this—though I cannot consciously recall the exact figures.”

“I did not think of that,” said she. It would have occurred at once to the acute and sceptical mind of Miss Douglas, and that lady might even have gone so far as to doubt the unconsciousness of the recollection; but Grace was of a more confiding disposition. “And yet,” she continued, “that would be almost equally strange.”

“Would it not? Don’t you think so?” said the Count, eagerly agreeing. “I sometimes think we lean too much on our senses, and attend to them to the exclusion of other sources of knowledge, that we may have if we only open our minds to them. I mean that we habitually think of nothing as knowledge that does not reach us, or other human beings, through the senses. We have no confidence in intimations through other channels—convictions reaching us otherwise than by ear or eye. They come and go, and we pay no heed to them; never stop to think whether they are true or not. Yet it may be that they are as much worthy of credit as the impressions of the senses.”

“That is what the Psychical Research Society says,” cried Grace; “and papa laughs at them, and is sometimes almost angry with me when I tell him anything that seems plausible to me.” She was a little surprised to find its principles supported by a man who enjoyed the confidence of her father, and rather pleased than otherwise, for she had a lurking inclination to believe in telepathy. The Count diagnosed this secret leaning from her tone, but judged it imprudent to be too open in his encouragement. He continued guardedly—

“They are too indiscriminate and exaggerative, of course.”

“Of course,” assented she, as in

duty bound. “And yet there may be a something.”

“I am disposed to be sceptical myself, but I could give them some curious facts.” His voice was grave and sad, and after a little silence, he sighed. Miss Quickset was impressed by these signs of emotion, and concluded that he was thinking of his wife. “But we are forgetting our comet,” he said with a start, as if making an effort to shake off painful memories. He went up to the platform again. “The cloud seems to have moved considerably. Won’t you come up and look?”

He was going to look through the telescope; but suddenly remembering, he stepped back with a smile and said—

“I forgot; you must look.”

“It doesn’t really matter in the least,” she said; but she made a grateful return to the affectionate light in his eyes, and took her place at the telescope.

“There is nothing to be seen but cloud,” she said; and looking up, she caught the intense gaze with which he had been watching her as she stood—a gaze so full of admiration that her heart fluttered with sudden trouble.

He removed his eyes at once, suppressing a sigh, and said, with an effort at cheerful interest in the comet, “It can’t take more than a minute to pass now. Let me look.” He bent down and looked along the barrel of the telescope. “It is just on the edge of the cloud.” After watching it for a few seconds, he stepped aside to make way for her. The platform was very narrow, and he left so little room for her that she almost touched him as she looked.

“There is still cloud,” she said at first. But the next instant she gave a joyful cry. “Yes; there it is, I believe. You look;” and she escaped to some little distance,

while he gravely confirmed her observation.

"There is no doubt about it," he said, cheerfully. "Very singular, is it not? But mind you say nothing to Mr Quickset about my telepathy. It would be a catch for the Psychical Society, would it not? We must now make a note of our observation, and see whether it agrees with Mr Millerby's orbit."

"I know how to do that," she cried, a little excited at the mention of this name.

"Do you indeed? Well, you read off the figures, and I will go down and act as your clerk. We can take it exactly at midnight, as it happens; for it is now but a few minutes to twelve."

He went down; and she indicated to him from the platform where to find writing materials in a cupboard near the clock.

"That is all right," he said cheerfully, looking up at her admiringly, with the paper in his hand.

At that instant a voice was heard shouting in stentorian tones, the sound apparently coming from the opening in the dome: "The 'eavens declare the glory of God! The 'eavens declare the glory of God! The 'eavens declare the glory of God!"

Grace gave a laugh as the third shout died away, and explained, "It is only a cracked Salvationist."

But the sentence was only half finished when she heard a piercing shriek from the Count, and looking over the railing, she saw him fall

heavily on the floor, and strike out wildly with clenched hands. She stood horror-stricken, grasping the rail, unable to move; while his features worked convulsively with frightful distortions, and his face assumed a livid hue. She tried to call for assistance, but her voice failed her.

But soon, to her great relief, she heard a rapid step on the stairs, and her father burst into the room. He had heard the startling shriek. "What is the matter?" he cried. A glance at the prostrate figure showed him what was the matter; and running to the Count, he raised him up, and propping him on one knee, tried to loosen the clothes from his neck.

"Run down, Grace," he cried to his daughter, "and wake up the servants."

"Can I help you, papa?" she asked, coming quickly down from the platform. Her presence of mind had returned with the appearance of her father.

"You are a brave girl," he said. "Yes; you might do that first." And conquering her horror at the gnashing teeth and the horribly squinting eyes, she helped her father to loosen his neckerchief, and fled swiftly from the room.

The paroxysm was of very brief duration; but the Count was so languid and sleepy when he recovered consciousness, that Quickset would not hear of his leaving the house that night, and a bedroom was prepared for him at Ourania Lodge.

CHAPTER XX.

Another person concerned in our story heard the words that produced such a startling effect on the pretended Count.

After parting with him that afternoon, Hugh Millerby had gone to his rooms to write the promised article. His line had

been to be as alarmist as the circumstances permitted, and he had enjoyed his commission. He was not to commit the 'Sphinx' to any astronomical heresies, but rather to insist upon the uncertainties of astronomical science. We know very little, after all, for certain. Our basis for trustworthy prediction is limited. This was the burden of the article. The 'Sphinx' could not afford to put on the mantle of Dr Cumming, and prophesy the end of the world on a fixed day and hour, or in a fixed year. A tone of scientific dignity had to be maintained, of intelligent scepticism—only the scepticism was directed, not, as is so often the case, against vulgar prophets of doom, but against the easy confidence of the man of science—a much more respectable kind of vulgarity.

Hugh had enjoyed his commission and striven to do his very best, and he was pretty well pleased with his performance when he put it in an envelope and went out to post it. And yet, partly from the fatigue of the unaccustomed labour, partly from having let his imagination dwell on what his father called awful possibilities, he was in a rather sad and sober state of mind, more disposed to melancholy than to mirth. As he strolled out in the cool air of the summer night, swinging his letter in his hand, he began to think of his unsuccessful love-making. It was in a very resigned way, without any of the poignancy of feeling that he had experienced before. The mood of philosophic reflection on the vanity of human wishes, and the sameness of all destinies a hundred years hence, which he had tried in vain to command on the morning after his rejection, was now upon him unsolicited.

When he had deposited his

precious manuscript in a pillar-box, the whim took him to prolong his walk in the direction of Ourania House. Nothing but the tenderest of good wishes for the welfare of the beautiful Grace was in his mind. He could think of her now without a pang, altogether irrespective of the man whom in her good pleasure she might consent to render happy. The bitterness of rejection was past. Even the stern father presented his stern lineaments through an amiable haze. Had he not the best of rights to be careful of his daughter, and to choose for her till she was of an age to choose for herself?

It was thus not so much as "a strange soul upon the Stygian banks, staying for waftage," that he prowled in front of Ourania House, while within the Count and Miss Quickset were looking for the comet. His heart was full, not of hunger and cursing, but of resignation and goodwill, and his head was full of humorous fancies. The light in the observatory struck him; and as he looked from it up at the cloudy sky, he smiled to think of the astronomer's disappointment. Surely men vex themselves in vain. He was turning away to stroll homewards, and had just, in the lightness of his heart, wished for a piece of chalk with which he might write on Quickset's gate "Fair-play—No bullying"—with reference to his own calm resolve to win the girl, by honourable means if he could, and if not by honourable means, not at all—when the shout of "The 'eavens declare the glory of God" arose suddenly on his left hand,—so suddenly as to make him start and almost lose his footing.

The surprise was great, though for various reasons it was not so overwhelming in its effects as it proved in the case of Count Ram-

assy. Hugh was not of an epileptic temperament. He was in a less strained condition of mind at the time. And further, on turning his face towards the sound, he was able to descry in the dim light the individual from whom the shout had proceeded.

It was a short stout barrel of a figure, crowned by the shovel-snouted cap of the Salvation Army, and tied round the neck by something that looked like a large pocket-handkerchief. The barrel-like shape of the figure was made more definite by the close-fitting coat, tightly buttoned; the arms were akimbo, and the hands stuck in the tail-pockets held them up tight against the hips. Of his nimble alertness of movement, he presently gave Hugh Millerby a specimen; for, observing the young man jump, as perhaps he had expected, at the sudden interruption of the silence, he swung round on his heels, and cocking his hat with one hand, while he kept the other unmoved, continued, in a somewhat lower voice—

"Yes, young man, and the hearth showeth forth 'is 'andiwork. Alleluiah! Praise the Lord!"

"You seem very merry to-night, my friend," said Hugh, thus addressed. He thought he had found a character whose acquaintance was worth cultivating.

"Merry! Lord bless you, I'm halways merry! It isn't merry to-day and down in the dumps to-morrow with me. It's halways merry, to-day and to-morrow and the day after, and the day after that. Praise the Lord!"

"What a happy man you must be!"

"I should rather think I am. 'Appy, did you say? 'Appy? I should rather think so," and he chuckled heartily, and shouted, "Praise the Lord! — Amen."

"Would you like to see more of us?" he asked, after a few more shouts. "Come with me, and I'll show you a lot, all 'appy, hall halways merry, 'appy and merry in the Lord Jesus Christ, praise His name. Come along, and we'll make you 'appy too. Come along, it will do you good."

Hugh was delighted with the invitation. As they walked along, the Salvationist marching at a brisk pace, it occurred to Millerby that it was not by accident that he had chosen Professor Quickset's residence to bawl at. "You know something of the gentleman who lives in Ourania House, I suppose?" he said.

"Mr Quickset! Bless you, yes, sir. Know something of 'im? I should think I did. Why, I was 'is hobservatory hassistant for years. Washed 'is bottles and kep' 'is hinstruments clean; and jolly particular 'e was about 'em, too."

"And you tired of it, I suppose?"

"Whether I was tired o' 'im or 'e was tired o' me, doesn't much matter. Leastways we separated. I was a oner to drink in those days, sir. I near killed myself along o' drinking spirits o' wine—what we use for cleaning the hinstruments, you know. I would 'a drunk almost anythink then—wit-riol, I believe. So Mr Quickset 'e gave me the sack. But I bears him no malice. I bears nobody no malice now for nothink. Praise the Lord! And hevery night I comes round as regular as the police, and gives 'im a Alleluiah, just to keep 'im in mind." Then raising his voice, he shouted, "Oo made the 'eavens? Oo made the hearth? Why, the Lord God Almighty, to be sure—'im as put the two peepers in your 'ead. Praise the Lord!"

Hugh was a little alarmed at

the volume of this cry echoing through the silent streets, and looked uneasily round to see whether there was a guardian of the night within hearing. He ventured to communicate his fears to his companion.

"The Bobbies?" cried he, cheerfully. "Bless you, no; they don't mind me. 'It's only Bellowin' Bill,' they say; 'there ain't no 'arm in 'im.' They're very lonely, poor chaps. They likes the sound of a 'uman voice.'" And raising his remarkably powerful organ again, Bellowin' Bill made the street resound with "A fine night. A beautiful night. It halways is a beautiful night, more or less, praise the Lord! It cheers 'em up a bit," he remarked to Hugh in a lower tone. "They calls me the Bellower quite friendly like. I'm Lieutenant William Popkins in the Army; but there ain't no pride about me, sir. I likes plain Bill, or Bellowin' Bill, just as well."

Hugh admitted to himself that, if he lived in the neighbourhood, he might be less indulgent to this trumpet-tongued prophet of optimism by night. "So you never take anything to keep up your spirits now, do you?" he observed, by way of keeping Bill down to conversational topics.

"Never, though I was a oner once. Never a drop. Nothink but the love of the Lord Jesus. Nothink like that to keep up the spirits. Not that I'm haverse to it hon principle. But I don't want it."

"Wine was given to make glad the heart of man," suggested Hugh.

"Yes, and beer, and gin, and rum, and whisky," said he, repeating the names with a gusto that made Hugh think him in danger of a relapse. "But I don't want

'em. I'm better without 'em. I'm as merry as a cricket, morning, noon, and night." And he cut a caper to show how high his spirits ran.

"Well," said Hugh, with a wicked desire to see whether he could damp the ardour of his companion, "you had better make the most of your time, for there is not much more left."

"As 'ow?"

"A comet has just been sighted that is bound to burn up the earth. We have only a few weeks more before us at most."

But, "Let it come!" cried the unquenchable Bill. "What if it does come? I don't mind. I'll be 'appy to the last, — 'appy and merry, praise the Lord! And then, may'ap, the angels will come for us in chariots or somethink, and we'll be 'appy and merry for ever and ever, Amen. But 'ush!" he said, suddenly stopping and taking Hugh by the arm.

Hugh and he were walking forward at a brisk pace, and in the dusk in front of them was a man in the garb of a Roman Catholic priest, whom they were rapidly overtaking.

"'Ush!" said Bellowin' Bill. Then, putting his hand to his mouth to serve as a funnel, he shouted with all his might, "Jesus Christ!"

The priest was apparently accustomed to the salutation, for he pursued his way without so much as turning his head.

"Jesus Christ!" bellowed Bill again, still louder.

A third time he repeated the shout, with the same absence of effect. Then turning to Hugh with an air of surprise, he said, "Blowed if it ain't enough to turn a bloke agin religion!"

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Hugh.

"Didn't you see?" returned the Bellow, in a tone of great surprise. "'E didn't bow 'is 'ead. Was that like a Christian? I tell you it was not. You just watch him. I'll give him another chance."

But Hugh checked the disrespectful ruffian. "No, no; I am quite satisfied. If you do it again, I must say good night to you."

"All right, sir. So long as you're satisfied, I am. But here we are at the barracks. You come with me, and I will show you what a night-watch is—a night-watch of true Christians, all 'appy and merry like myself. They're all truly 'appy, sir: no fear. You come in."

The barracks stood back a little way from the street, within a railing, and the sound of a hymn came from the interior. The lieutenant, rapid in his movements, hurried his new-found friend in, and up through a rather sparse audience, towards a platform at the other end. Hugh, fearing that he was about to be exhibited as a convert, tried to stop his impetuous conductor, and explain that he would rather wait in the body of the hall. But Lieutenant Popkins was too intent on pushing forward to listen to him; and when they were within a few yards of the platform, Hugh dropped into a seat and let him pursue his way alone. The lieutenant did not return for him, but proceeded at once to give him a specimen of his position in the army. He whispered to another officer on the platform, who was leading the hymn, and dashing to the front at the conclusion of the verse, held up his arms as a signal to stop, and after leading a

volley of Amens, raised his voice to its full pitch, and said—

"Fellow-soldiers, 'appy soldiers [here the speaker was stopped by loud cries of "Praise the Lord!"]. Yes, you are 'appy now; but I am going to try your souls. As I was coming here to-night, I met a man, and what do you think he told me? Why, he told me that the end of the world was coming. And coming when, fellow-soldiers? Why, next week—next blessed week! And what did I say to him, my friends? Was I frightened? Was I dismayed? Was my 'eart cast down within me? [Confused cries of "No, no!" "Amen!" "Halleluia!" &c., through which Bill thundered—] Not a bit of it. I said, 'Let it come!' That is what I said. Says I, 'Let it come;' and I have brought him here to-night to let him see that we all of us say, 'Let it come!' [Loud shouts of 'Let it come!' and other cries.] Yes, we are ready. We are prepared. We are not afraid. Let it come! It is a comet what is coming, to try our faith. Three cheers for the comet! Let it come! We are ready."

There was a babel of triumphant shouts for two or three minutes, and then the hymn was resumed. Bill detected Hugh where he had taken refuge among the audience, and rejoined him.

"I told you so," he cried. "That's true 'appiness. Nothing makes *us* afraid. All 'appy as sand-boys, even with a comet blazing over our 'eads. Pull the devil's kingdom down. That's the way to do it. You come here next Sunday, and you'll see something like an engagement with the enemy."

DANIEL FOSQUÉ.¹

"We are so made that the crime of one man is but the malady of another."

Dramatis personæ.

DANIEL FOSQUÉ (*a famous Goldsmith of Paris*).

ANDRÉ (*his Apprentice*).

NICOLAS HUMPHREY.

M. DE FARAS.

M. SARGRAIS (*Chief of the Police*).
Several Night-Watchmen.

MADAME LA MARQUISE DE ST

OMER.

STEPHANIE (*Fosqué's Daughter*).

Period—Louis Quatorze.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A street in Paris, with DANIEL FOSQUÉ'S house on the right and a monument in the middle of the roadway, obstructing further view up the street. The monument has statues in niches round it, about three feet from the ground.*

ANDRÉ is discovered standing about gossiping with neighbours as
NICOLAS HUMPHREY and M. DE FARAS enter.

Humphrey. You are the very man I wanted to meet.

De Faras. Then it is well met indeed, for if I can put Nicolas Humphrey under an obligation I shall be a happy man. What can I do for you?

Hum. I met last night at the reception a certain lady (whose name, my dear Faras, I am not going to tell you, so don't get curious), and this morning I am filled with the desire to present her with some token that shall fitly represent the depth of the impression that she has made upon my poor English heart. And it is here that I want your assistance; for though I contemplate staying some time now, I have, as you know, never been long in Paris before. You must therefore take me at once where I may best purchase what I want. Come, lead on!

De Far. Well, but first tell me what shape the token is to take! Is it to be an elephant, a monkey, or a jewel?

Hum. A jewel it must be, Faras, of great worth; and not only a jewel—for a mere stone is a mere stone—it must have a setting of exquisite beauty and rare workmanship such as shall balance the value of the gem.

De Far. Take my advice and get an elephant; it will be safer just now.

Hum. Too large, I am afraid, to go into the pocket, and therefore not so safe.

(*DE FARAS comes closer to HUMPHREY and lowers his voice.*)

De Far. It is very fortunate I met you.

Hum. What do you mean?

De Far. Come a little further this way, as we happen to be outside the house of Daniel Fosqué,

¹ This play was suggested to me by an old German story of a goldsmith who murdered his customers to get back his work sold to them. *He was not a monomaniac.*

the greatest jeweller in Paris, and what I have to tell you is a matter we don't talk about loud in the streets. (*They move to the side.*)

Hum. What is it?

De Far. Have you not heard in England of "The Invisible of Paris"?

Hum. "The Invisible?" no, indeed!

De Far. Many years ago he came upon us, murdering M. de Seville on his way home from the palace and disappearing with the jewels he carried; then followed the Comte de Salle, and a fatal list has succeeded; and only last night a gentleman rushed into the hall of the Marquise de St Omer, as she was alighting from her chair, having escaped with his life by wearing a coat of mail.

Hum. But why should you credit one villain with all these deaths?

De Far. Because the same stab-thrust, leaving the same awful wound, is found in the left side of every victim alike.

Hum. Ay, that does seem like one man's work; and you call him "The Invisible"?

De Far. Yes; for several times he has killed a man close to some of the night-watch, who declare solemnly that when they chase him he makes with the utmost speed for this part of the city, and actually, when they are close upon him, disappears under their eyes.

Enter M. SARGRAIS, the Chief of the Police.

Sar. Ah, M. de Faras. Have you seen Madame de St Omer this morning?

De Far. Yes; I met her leaving her house.

Sar. Is the report true?

De Far. Quite.

Sar. Who was the gentleman? Did she tell you?

De Far. She is quite ignorant of

that. She told me that she was in her hall, and the servants were just shutting the door, when the man dashed in, and in breathless agitation explained that he had been attacked and had fled for his life till chance brought him to her door.

Sar. But did she not ask him his name?

De Far. No. She let him out at the back of the house; and he implored her, as she had saved his life, to accept the jewels he still had with him, and for which, no doubt, he had been attacked.

Sar. Then she has the jewels!

De Far. No doubt.

Sar. Ah, I will go and see her. The jewels will, at any rate, give us the gentleman's name, and he may help us to identify this—murderer. He is the first who has looked him in the face and lived.

De Far. Is it a secret how the jewels will tell you their owner's name? For I can't fathom it.

Sar. Very simple. The jewels by their setting and marks will tell me whose workmanship they are, and the man who made them will tell me to whom he sold them.

[*Exit SARGRAIS.*]

De Far. I never thought of that. He is quite right. (*To HUMPHREY.*) Now, are you still bent on carrying priceless gems about the streets of Paris?

Hum. (*laughs heartily.*) Why, my dear De Faras, if it is dangerous, so much the better, for it will add to the value of the gift.

De Far. Well! (*Shrugs his shoulders.*) When will you see her?

Hum. To-night, this very night.

De Far. (*points to Fosqué's house.*) There lives the greatest jeweller in France, and, for all I know, in the world; but, before you go in, tell me where you have appointed to meet this lady of yours. Then I will after Sargrais

and tell him to have the watch on the alert in the neighbourhood. It is a precaution worth taking—indeed it is.

Hum. Oh, well, if you must know, it is in this very street at the house of a kinswoman of hers up there, beyond the monument, about fifty yards.

De Far. Good! Farewell till to-morrow. [*Exit DE FARAS.*]

Hum. He's a good fellow, but what a fuss about nothing! (*To ANDRÉ.*) Ho, fellow! is your master within?

And. No, sir; he has been away now some two hours, but he will be back ere the day is much older.

Hum. But can you not strike a bargain for him?

And. I! I sell his work? Why, sir, it will take you a long day to get him to sell you any of it himself.

Hum. Indeed! Is not the making and selling of jewellery his business and occupation?

And. His business, sir, is without doubt the making of jewellery; but, next to that, his chiefest occupation is the avoiding of selling it.

Hum. In truth a most uncommon occupation for a goldsmith.

And. My master, sir, is not a common goldsmith. He loves his workmanship more than money, and his craft more than profit.

Hum. A very artist.

And. The greatest in France, sir—without a rival.

Hum. Well, will you tell him that I shall visit him as the day wanes, desiring to purchase his work?

And. I will tell him so, sir.

[*Exit HUMPHREY.*]

SCENE II.—DANIEL FOSQUÉ's workshop, an old panelled room with turning-lathes, vices, iron chests, &c. DANIEL FOSQUÉ, ANDRÉ his apprentice, and STEPHANIE his daughter, discovered; the first two are working at the back, and STEPHANIE is spinning by the fire.

And. Master, let me take a turn at that chasing. I am sure you must be very tired.

Fos. They must go hungry who cannot work. Have you ever heard me say I was tired?

And. You never complain, sir, of anything except parting with your workmanship; but I am sure you are often weary, though you say nothing of it.

Steph. Dear father, let André do it; you know you work more hours than are good for you.

Fos. My child, life is a long, low corridor, wherein if a man bow not his neck he may bruise his forehead. Labour is a blessing within all men's reach, and to the wicked it is their only comforter, in that it banishes memory.

Steph. But, father, you are not at all wicked.

Fos. Am I not? (*They go on working; presently he continues musingly.*) After all, there is one thing even worse than a wicked man, and that is a wicked book.

And. How so, sir? A wicked man cannot but do more evil than a wicked book, which may often rot unread.

Fos. Ay, it may rot, even as the wicked man rots at last; but a wicked book, André, can never repent. Now even I may one day repent, and herein am I better than a wicked book.

(ANDRÉ comes down near STEPHANIE to get an implement from a shelf.)

STEPH. (*aside to ANDRÉ.*) It is

one of his melancholy fits, André ; some of them must have been trying to get from him the work they have ordered.

And. (*aside to her*). There are a great quantity of beautiful things in the chest there quite finished, and no doubt the great gentlemen and ladies are importunate to have them.

Fos. What are you whispering about ? Ay, ay, billing and cooing, cooing and billing. Daughter, is he eloquent ?

Steph. Well, sir, I think his words are always chosen with discretion.

Fos. Knavery, starvation, and love give men persuasive tongues ; but I am ready to believe that André is beholden to the last only. Man is fire, woman straw, and the devil comes and sets them in a blaze.

And. With all respect I will not allow that the devil has anything to do with my desire to marry Stephanie.

Fos. Go to ! go to ! Young men always think old men fools, but old men know well enough who wears the cap and bells.

And. If I might venture, sir, I would submit that when age scorns youth merely because it is young, it is rather making too much of death.

Fos. A man cannot make too much of death, whether he be old or young. For Death with his brother Sleep are your poor man's only friends ; one helps him to forget life, the other to leave it. But as to this question of wedlock, Master André, this much I will grant you, that he who marries does well——

And. Ay, truly.

Fos. But he who marries not does better. Therefore, thou wilt not yet marry my daughter.

Enter the MARQUISE DE ST OMER.

Mar. Good day, worthy Master Fosqué—good day.

Fos. There are no good days, madam ; to me all are evil, evil days. Do not, therefore, come hither to make them worse by wanting to take away any of my work with you. For you shall have none of it, none of it.

Mar. No, I have not come to rob you of any of your treasures to-day, though you know how long I have envied you that exquisite gold dish up there.

Fos. (*taking it down*). Ah, look well at it, madam. I will let you see it as you do not wish to take it from me. André, how long did this take me ?

And. It must have been at least twenty weeks.

Steph. More even than that, I think.

Fos. Ay, more, more.

Mar. It is wonderfully finished. He must have been a perfect master who taught you your marvellous skill. What was his name ?

Fos. Satan, madam, and I have never seen a worker in gold and silver to equal him.

Mar. (*laughing, takes the jewels from her pocket*). Did you or he make these, then ?

Fos. (*seizes the work in a transport*). Ah ! Give it me ! give it me !

He hurries up with the jewels and puts them away and brings down a bag of money which he puts down with a bang on the table, then he walks about rubbing his hands together with apparent glee.

Mar. They are your work then, Fosqué ! (*He takes no notice, goes on walking. To ANDRÉ.*) They are his work ?

And. Yes, madam, I remember them.

Fos. Oh yes, they are mine, they are mine. Fool that I was to let them go ; but I have got them safe back now.

Mar. To whom did you sell them?

Fos. (*stops in front of her and says slowly*). The man took them from me and gave them to you; how, then, do you not know him as well as I? Ah! I forgot, he perhaps gave them to you in the dark. His name was the Comte de Vallette. Give him his money back. I keep the jewels.

Mar. I will do so. I have no doubt the arrangement will please him, for your jewels brought "the Invisible" upon him last night.

Fos. Indeed! Then he's gone to grass with his teeth upwards.

Mar. (*to the others*). What does he mean?

And. Methinks, madam, he means that the man is buried.

Mar. If you mean, sir, that the Comte was killed, you are fortunately mistaken; for being a player for high stakes, and therefore often abroad at night with large sums upon him, he told me he had of late worn a coat of mail under his tunic, so that the bloodthirsty fiend only blunted his dagger. He ran for his life, and escaped without a scratch.

Fos. I am glad of it. A coat of mail, you say?

Mar. So he told me himself.

Fos. Just so. A coat of mail—most fortunate.

Mar. It was indeed. For my part, were I a gallant I would not walk abroad at night, not even at the bidding of the most beautiful woman in France.

Fos. Many men, madam, would be cowards if they had courage enough. He is probably as much in want of courage as money.

Mar. I don't suppose he is in want of money.

Fos. I thought you said he gambled for high stakes.

Mar. I understood him to say that he did.

Fos. Then must the gentleman be very poor.

Mar. Poor? You mean rich.

Fos. Poor, madam, poor. The richest cannot desire to lose, and only the indigent can desire to live on their friends and companions. Therefore, as I have said, if the man be a gambler, he must be very poor.

Mar. Well, I never heard such a view of gambling before!

Fos. Very like. (*He goes to the working bench and sits down to work.*)

Mar. May I ask you one question, Fosqué, before I go? (*Fosqué looks at her vacantly and nods.*) How is it that this horrible murderer attacks only those who have your jewellery upon them?

Fos. Is it so? Is there such taste in the rogue?

Mar. So M. Sargrais told me.

Fos. Did he? Ah, your accomplished thief is a connoisseur; he will not kill a man for a metal button.

Mar. But how does he know who carries your work? For it seems a man may carry a doublet full of other goldsmiths' jewels through the streets and never be discovered or molested.

Fos. Young men are braggarts. All Paris knows when one of them has got a thing from me.

Mar. That, I think, will not always account for it.

Fos. (*rising and moving towards the door*). No! Then ask the gentleman in black; the matter lies in his particular province.

Mar. What! your old master?

Fos. Even he. I have heard that he never denies a woman anything.

Mar. But where shall I find him, Fosqué?

Fos. Do you live in Paris, madam, and not know that he may be met in every street?

(Opens the door for her to go out.)

Mar. (to herself). It's clear I can't get anything more out of him, so I suppose I had better go.

Fos. (bowing low). You will not, madam, have to walk far.

[Exit MARQUISE. ANDRÉ looks out of the window.]

And. Sir, I forgot to tell you that an Englishman came here this morning when you were out, and said he would return, but I told him you would sell him nothing.

Fos. You told him the truth.

And. I am afraid he didn't believe me, for I see he has come.

Fos. He may come, if he is so eager to waste his time.

Enter HUMPHREY. FOSQUÉ comes forward and bows to him.

Hum. Good morrow, Fosqué. I have come, as no doubt your apprentice has told you, to look at your work.

Fos. Only to look at it?

Hum. Well, sir, I have heard your name spoken of in England as being the greatest master of your craft in Europe, and being in Paris I thought you would perhaps permit me to see some of your renowned handiwork.

Fos. Ah, do they say that of me in England? Of the justice of such judgment, sir, I cannot speak; there may be others better skilled than I, for I am old now, and my hands are not what they were; but in the love of my art I will yield to no man. I have risen early and toiled late all the days of my life, that I might at the last achieve something worthy of that art. The road to perfect skill in anything is steep and full of stones. I have not attained it yet, and cannot now live to do so; but, sir, I have attained to this, that I love my craft and my work better than my life. I am not a man of many

words, therefore look at my work and depart.

(He fetches various pieces of work and lays them before HUMPHREY; lastly, the jewels left by the MARQUISE.)

Hum. Ah, these are indeed exquisite! At what price would you fix these were you ever to part with them?

Fos. I shall not part with them. They are worth five hundred louis d'ors.

Hum. Would you not let me purchase them that I might take them to England, and show them in my country how just is your fame?

Fos. No, sir; I would never let them leave France.

Hum. Well, then, you shall be satisfied in that; for if you will let me have them, I will, this night, give them to the fairest lady in Paris.

Fos. What is the lady's name?

Hum. Nay, nay, my worthy Fosqué, that is sacred.

Fos. Where does she live?

Hum. You would not know the street were I to tell you its name, for it is at the other end of Paris. Rest assured, the necklace will reach her safe enough, if only you give it to me. Come, good Fosqué, you will let me take it?

Fos. If I give it you, will you keep it safe?

Hum. Safe! how? What do you mean?

Fos. I have been told there is a nimble fellow abroad in the streets, who takes my work from drunken fools o' nights. Beware of him!

Hum. I will; do but give me the jewels, I will be very sure not to lose them.

Fos. He is lean, very lean, and terribly swift—in the feet.

Hum. Is he, indeed? And who do you think this supple fellow is?

Fos. Ah, ah! his name his Death! (*HUMPHREY starts.*) But, noble sir, let not this dash you. For if you must have the jewels, why you must have them; you must forgive an old man who loves his craft better than his own life, and one piece of his handiwork better than yours—

Hum. But what has this to do with sudden deaths?

Fos. Death, I take it, is always sudden to the unprepared. Are you thus?

Hum. Indeed I am, as I fear most of us are.

Fos. Ah, then you had best leave this necklace with me another month. I have thought me of a perfection that might even yet be wrought upon it.

Hum. Do you think it might be improved?

Fos. Ay, all things can be improved except God.

Hum. Let me see it. (*Takes it and gets nearer the door.*) Nay, it is indeed perfection already, good Fosqué, and here is more than the value you set upon it. (*Gets to the door.*)

Fos. Ah, give it me back!

Hum. Nay, nay, I cannot.

(*HUMPHREY throws his purse on to the table and exit; FOSQUÉ hurries out after him.*)

And. That was very sharp of the Englishman, was it not? I never thought he would get his necklace to-day.

Steph. I wonder he took it. I was quite frightened at what father said about the murders.

And. But, you see, the Englishman was still more frightened of visiting his mistress empty-handed, who, by the way (*FOSQUÉ opens the door a little way and listens*), does not live, as he said, at the other end of Paris, but in this very street, a few doors up, beyond the monument; for I heard him tell his friend so

this morning when they were talking in the street outside.

(*FOSQUÉ shuts the door gently.*)

Steph. Well, then, he kept his secret very well, for I quite believed him.

And. I shall slip out to-night, and watch outside the house where she lives, and you must let me in when I come back.

Steph. What do you mean? What for?

And. This invisible fellow always attacks his victims near their mistresses' houses; and if the Englishman is attacked, I will see whether I can't help him to get the best of it. He would be my sworn friend for ever. Besides, it would be a real adventure, which of all things is what I like.

Steph. Oh, but I hate adventures, André, and I shan't let you go. Supposing they attacked you, what should I do?

And. Oh, you may be quite sure they won't touch me. I am not worth killing.

Steph. But you know you are worth more than killing to me; you are worth—what do you think?

And. Tell me.

Steph. Well, I was going to say I might possibly think you were worth living for. But I would not make you vain, André; for then, you see, your value would go down again.

And. Well, if I am worth living for, you are beyond all possibility of doubt worth living and dying for.

Steph. Then it is clear we are both most valuable persons, at any rate to each other.

And. So much so, that we should each become the veriest beggar if we lost the other.

Steph. Therefore we must never lose each other.

And. And never part!

Steph. Never!

And. A bargain?

Steph. A bargain.

And. Good! Let's seal it. (*He kisses her.*)

Steph. (*going to the table*). I wonder how much more he has paid than he need. Shall we peep into the bag? Undo the strings, André.

(*ANDRÉ unties the strings, and they look in with their heads together. Re-enter FOSQUÉ.*)

Fos. What are you doing? Does the sight of gold tickle your greedy eyeballs? Then make haste and get blind! Do your fingers love to paddle with money? Go and ask God to strike you paralytic!

And. Oh, my good master, no such avarice was in my thoughts!

Steph. Indeed, sir, André is no miser, he is a liberal to a fault; it were better if he loved money more than he does.

Fos. (*walking up and down*). To think that I should have been

befooled like this! Oh, André, André! why did you let him take it from me? What do I care for his wretched money-bags! Ah! it drives me—God knows where! I must have it back, I will have it back! I say, I will have it back!

Steph. But, dear father, he has paid you more than you asked.

Fos. Bah! Money! money! I want no money! He is rich who has enough, and he has enough who need neither borrow nor flatter. "Enough" carries us through the world; but if we get more than enough, we must carry it through the world, a millstone round our throats. Where is the use of hoarding? Money is a mere manure; to be useful it must be spread out. I wanted not his filthy money, and he has stolen my work! I tell you he has stolen it, and I will have it back!

He stands haggard and wild-looking as the curtain descends.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The street outside DANIEL FOSQUÉ's house.*

NIGHT.—*Enter SARGRAIS.*

Sar. Everything seems very quiet to-night. The watch should pass along here directly, so I'll wait for them. (*Walks up and down.*) It is very chilly; it will be almost a frost before morning. I must catch this fellow; my reputation is staked upon it. (*Enter several Watchmen.*) Well met. Have you met any villain abroad?

1st Watch. Nay, God be thanked, we have met neither ghost nor devil to-night!

Sar. You need not search for ghosts; it is villanous flesh and blood we want.

2d Watch. It's ugly work, sir, chasing apparitions.

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1st Watch. Indeed, sir, it is no flesh and blood we are after, else were we all as valiant as Columbus.

3d Watch. It is only dead men that can run upon the air without touching the ground, and go through solid walls!

Sar. Dead men! What do you mean?

2d Watch. Ay, it is a dead man, for some have heard its bones rattle as it runs!

1st Watch. And one of the watch, sir, in the next *quartier* swore to me that once, as he pursued it, the thing turned its head, and he perceived, in the moonlight, that it had no eyes in the ghastly

sockets, and no flesh over the grinning teeth!

Sar. Nonsense! nonsense!

1st Watch. Ah! what was that?
(*They listen.* Fosqué laughs under the stage.)

Sar. It is some revellers returning from a banquet.

1st Watch. Ay, doubtless! Come along, comrades, we'll go and guard them home!

(*Exit the Watchmen, hurriedly, huddling close together.*)

Sar. Truth is truth, and I like not this business. Eugh! I suppose it is the cold, but my skin creeps. It cannot be denied that in this very street, indeed somewhere near this very spot, I myself have seen the thing disappear under my own eyes. How can flesh and blood disappear? (*Fosqué laughs underneath.*) Ah, God help me! What was that? I cannot face the immortal! I will after them, and walk no more alone to-night.

[*Runs out.*]

The moon comes out and shines on the monument; one of the statues silently turns on its pedestal, and Fosqué, white and wild-looking, appears from behind it; he looks cautiously round and leaps nimbly down.

Fos. Belshazzar was no coward, and the words on the wall did not frighten him; why, then, did he tremble? Because the hand that wrote belonged to an invisible body; and thus we see that he who would face a thousand natural deaths runs away before a laugh from an unseen throat! We sleep-walkers frighten honest wakeful souls out of all knowledge of themselves—do we not, Daniel? Ha, ha! do we not? The night is cold, but very quiet—quiet and cold as a nun at her prayers. See how the houses sleep in the moon, their eyelids shut and their gabled brows frowning above! They have slept a long, long time,

while we pass to and fro within, being their melancholy dreams. Listen! They are speaking to me. "Daniel Fosqué," they whisper to me—"Daniel Fosqué, wake us not, wake us not." Nay, then, I will tread softly. I will not wake you, ye sad, dark habitations, that cover up so much sleep, so much weariness, so much despair, so much death. Ah, listen! they are whispering to me again. "What do you here, Daniel Fosqué? what do you here?" Ah, what? True, my jewels. (*He goes suddenly striding up and out past the monument, saying*) Ay, ay, ay, my jewels, my jewels! [*Exit.*]

(*The door of Fosqué's house opens, and ANDRÉ and STEPHANIE enter.*)

And. What a lovely night! Upon my word, it's enough to turn a burglar into a poet, right off!

Steph. Oh! but you will take care of yourself, won't you, André? You are sure you have nothing about you to tempt the robbers? Do look once again in all your pockets before you start.

And. Start? Why, you talk as if I were going a journey to Jerusalem, when I am only going ten doors up the street. Now go in and shut the door, and when I give three raps you will know I have come back.

Steph. Whatever you do, don't knock too hard, or you may wake father up, and he would be very angry with your going out at this time of night; you know he would. Oh, do give it up!

And. Run along—here's somebody coming. (*Exit STEPHANIE.*) This is most romantic! I'd give anything to have a good run after this invisible gentleman. I'm not much of a believer in your common cutpurse turning himself, whiff! into a smell of brimstone in the middle of the street. Ah! I must hide myself.

(He goes into the shadow of a doorway. Enter HUMPHREY, humming to himself.)

Hum. I am afraid, like all true lovers, I have outrun time; and the moon, that loves all lovers, will show me whether I have or not. *(Looks at his watch.)* Yes, I am, indeed, too early. So I will tarry a moment or two. Let me see,—yes, it is so—this is Fosqué's house. I like not that old man, and I will buy no more of him. He hath a most evil eye, and most assuredly I believe he would this morning have liked to kill me, for merely desiring to have what I paid for. Ha, ha! I had to be pretty active to get away from him, for he was almost too quick for me; I never thought his old bones could move so fast. He is, no doubt, sleeping off his choler comfortably enough in there now. But I am getting too cold to wait any longer, so, early or not, I will on to my warmer destination. *(Goes up and out.)*

And. Poor, dear man! Fancy his thinking that old Daniel Fosqué wanted to kill him or anybody else! I am afraid I am not in for an adventure to-night; the place is as quiet and empty as a graveyard, but I may as well track him safely down to his fair haven.

(Goes up and out; a moment's pause; then a very short scuffle is heard, a heavy fall and a groan; then ANDRÉ's voice, loudly.)

And. (without). Ah, you wretched coward! Strike a man from behind! By God's help you shall not escape!

Enter FOSQUÉ, running, pursued by ANDRÉ. ANDRÉ catches and struggles with him in a dark corner.

And. Infernal, dastardly, murderous hound! Turn yourself into brimstone now, if you can! An

honest man has got you by the throat this time, and so sure as the stars are above us, you have done your last murder! Come out into the moonlight, and let me look at your damned visage! Come out, I say! *(ANDRÉ drags him into the moonlight. They stand and look at each other. FOSQUÉ grins; ANDRÉ gasps, and steps back. FOSQUÉ immediately runs up; ANDRÉ, recovering, at once gives chase. FOSQUÉ runs once round the monument, and jumps up. The statue turns, and he is gone in an instant. ANDRÉ, following him round the monument, comes running down and finds FOSQUÉ disappeared. He stands bewildered.)* Merciful heavens! he has vanished! *(He runs to the door and gives three tremendous knocks.)* Stephanie! Stephanie! open quickly, for the love of God! *(STEPHANIE unbars the door, and appears on the threshold.)* Quick! for your life! run and see if your father is in his room!

Steph. What do you mean? Of course he is in his room, and for pity's sake don't rouse him with this noise.

And. Nay, then, I will go and see if he is there myself!

(FOSQUÉ appears in the doorway in a long cloak.)

Fos. Who is this brawler? Stephanie, begone! *(STEPHANIE goes into the house.)* Who are you, I say? *(Holds his lantern to his face.)* Ha, ha! my own apprentice! I did not know you walked the streets in the dead of night, sirrah! Get you in and disturb not my house again—get you in; do you hear?

And. My heart will stop. O God, grant that this is a dream!

[ANDRÉ goes into the house.]

Fos. Ay, it is a dream, for all things are a dream!

SCENE II.—DANIEL FOSQUÉ's workshop. FOSQUÉ and ANDRÉ are discovered silently at work. STEPHANIE with her needlework by the fire. They remain silent a few moments, then—

Fos. André.

And. Sir?

Fos. Have you ever known a madman?

And. I do not think, sir, that I ever have. (*They go on working.*)

Fos. Is madness, think you, a crime?

And. I believe, sir, it is more often a punishment for crime done by the madman himself or by his parents.

Fos. I had none—that is, I have never heard of them. Have you put my mark on that plate? Let me look at it. Good—very good! You are a cunning craftsman. Do you desire to wed my daughter?

And. (*hesitating*). I did once.

Fos. How now? What do you mean? Do you not love her still?

And. Ay, God knows I love her!

Fos. Good. She may one day lose her father; will you then stand between her and the world, and guard her from the taunts of men? (*STEPHANIE rises and goes to him.*) Will you defend her in that dark hour?

And. I will—with my life!

Fos. Then thou shalt have her.

(*He leads STEPHANIE to ANDRÉ, who folds her in his arms.*)

Fos. (*sitting down*). No man can tell the weight of another's burden.

Steph. Dear, dear father (*she sits at his feet*), what burden can you have that even I, humble as I am, would not willingly share with you? you, whose only sin, if it be a sin, is a too great pride and love of your work.

Fos. Sin! what is sin? Is it not a thing that the physician would often better cure than the divine?

And. That is a strange doctrine.

Fos. Not at all. We are so made that the crime of one man is but the malady of another.

And. Humph! And thus murder is a mere disease.

(*A pause. FOSQUÉ looks steadily at ANDRÉ, who goes on working.*)

Fos. Leave us a moment, Stephanie. [*Exit STEPHANIE.*]

Fos. Well?

And. If you wish me to speak on this subject, sir, I must say that I cannot regard a murderer as an invalid to be pitied and physicked.

Fos. Was your father a drunkard?

And. No, indeed!

Fos. Then being ignorant of the craving of the drunkard's son, judge him not! Had you that craving, you might perchance drink as deep as he. You started in the race unequal, and who knows whether he may not have gained on you? Do you blame the oak for being stunted that is planted on a rock?

And. No; I blame the husbandman that planted it there.

Fos. But what if the husbandman be God? It will take another world to cancel the inequalities of this one, if justice be not a figment. Therefore, my worthy apprentice, till you get into that other world remember that you see and understand all things only partially. No man will ever see the other face of the moon till, having climbed heaven, he looks back!

(*They go on working a few minutes in silence.*)

And. Master, will you hear a dream I had last night?

Fos. (*slowly*). Ay.

And. Methought I saw you murder the Englishman who took away that necklace.

(*Fosqué does not answer.*)

And. (continues). The moon was very bright, and I distinctly saw your features.

Fos. Dreams are knavish frolics of Nature. It was once thought that they proved us to be immortal, till some irreverent fellow remarked that your common hearth-rug dog will hunt in his sleep; since when, dreams have remained inexplicable and purposeless to the wise, but to the foolish, superstition and a stumbling-block.

And. But my dream had little of the dream about it till you disappeared in the middle of the street. That, I own, was somewhat after the manner of phantasy!

Fos. (laughs). Ha, ha! I disappeared, did I?—disappeared? Ha, ha! Where did you sup last night, André?—where did you sup?

And. At home, sir; but I was awake and walking in the street when I had my dream.

Fos. Ah! I remember you said you were on the dark side of the street at the time.

And. I have never said so; but your memory is good, and will recall to you that you were in the moonlight.

Fos. What thou seest in the moonlight believe not.

And. I am not likely to believe my dream to be reality, for doubtless when I inquire I shall find that the Englishman is alive and well.

Fos. Yes; and that he slept a better sleep than you did last night.

And. Ay, a sleep too deep for dreams.

Fos. (suddenly changes his manner). When a crime sleeps, wake it not, for the dead cannot reward their avengers.

(*ANDRÉ sits doggedly in silence.*)

FOSQUÉ rises, and standing over him, says as follows in terrific accents:—

Fos. It is an idiot ivy that would blast the tree whereon it grows. Leave thy damned dream where thou found it. Look no further. For he who prys into a tomb had best beware that the door shut not behind him and bury him, living, with the dead!

Re-enter STEPHANIE. ANDRÉ buries his head in his arms on the table.

Steph. (going to him). Are you unhappy, André? What's the matter?

Fos. Hush, child! do not awake him; he is asleep, and—he has been dreaming.

Enter the MARQUISE.

Mar. Well, good Fosqué, I have seen the Comte de Vallette.

Fos. And have given him back his money?

Mar. Indeed, no; for he says nothing will induce him to have back either the money or the jewels, for he declares that I saved his life, the which he values higher than both put together.

Fos. Ah! he values his life more than my work, does he?

Mar. I have not the least doubt of it.

Fos. I share the view in that matter with the man he met that night. However, we are all now well satisfied, for he will keep his life, you your money, and I my handiwork.

Mar. Softly, not too fast, good Fosqué. I cannot possibly accept money from M. le Comte, but as he insists, I must persuade myself to accept his jewels; and therefore, most excellent and worthy Fosqué, here is your money back, and you must give me the diamonds.

(*FOSQUÉ turns and walks up and down in angry silence.*)

And. Are you not afraid, madam,

to possess that which brought the assassin upon the Comte de Vallette?

Mar. My young friend, I do not walk the streets of Paris *alone* at night; and if I did, "the Invisible" has never yet been known to attack a lady.

Fos. The devil was always a gentleman.

Mar. Yes, indeed! He carried gallantry to perfection last night, for, as you know, he killed the Englishman, M. Humphrey, under his lady's window, but was considerate enough not to wake her in the doing of it!

Fos. An Englishman, say you? Dead! Why, it must be to him that I sold a diamond and sapphire bracelet for his mistress but yesterday. Dead? Well, your lover was ever Death's favourite! Where did this fair one live that slept so soundly?

Mar. Is it possible you have not yet heard of it all! Why, his body was found this morning only a few doors from here.

Fos. He said she lived at the other end of Paris; the man was a liar.

Mar. And there was a large crowd outside as I came by, and M. Sargrais and his men were examining the spot.

Fos. Were they? I had not observed it. I have my work to do. I leave gaping in the streets to my neighbours—gaping at a corpse will not unstiffen its limbs.

Mar. It is very dreadful that they can't find this horrible murderer. M. Sargrais will, I hope, give him a fearful punishment if he ever catches him.

Fos. If he is a man, madam, he is punished already.

Mar. How so?

Fos. He that lives in daily dread of torture suffers torture in that dread; and he that deserves such torture, dreads it.

Mar. What a philosopher it is!

Fos. Never believe it; many talk like philosophers that live like knaves.

Mar. But you are no knave, —in proof whereof, give me my jewels.

Fos. Are you tired of living?

Mar. Not at all; but on the contrary, I shall increase my pleasure in life by the wearing of your most admirable work. When, Fosqué, did you begin so much to dislike parting with your jewels?

Fos. When my customers began to be killed for it. I will go get your necklace. (*He goes up to fetch it.*)

Mar. (*aside*). Good as he is odd. Few goldsmiths would care what became of their customers so they paid their bills.

And. (*aside to her*). Madam, for the love of God do not take the necklace!

Mar. My good fellow, what do you mean?

Fos. (*coming down with the necklace in his hand.*) What said he, madam?

Mar. He was imploring me, for the love of God do not take the necklace!

Fos. He's a fool; attend not to him. Here is your bauble. You will not lose it. (*A shout is heard outside.*)

Mar. What is that?

(*They all run to the window, except Fosqué, who remains in front, apparently unconscious of everything but the loss of his jewels.*)

Fos. So they take all I love away from me, bit by bit, piece by piece, and they grin at me as they do it. Perdition! I saw her grin at me when she took it.

Mar. (*at the window*). See, see! Sargrais is doing something to the statue in the monument there!

Steph. What on earth is he doing, embracing that old figure!

Fos. (still at his own thoughts). But Daniel Fosqué will have it back one night, then it will be his turn to grin—his turn to grin!

Mar. Look, look! They are giving him a torch.

Steph. He has turned the thing round. And see, he has disappeared behind it! Father, father, come and see!

Fos. See what? see what? Come away, girl, from the window, and let not our neighbours think my daughter a busybody. What is the shouting about, André?

And. M. Sargrais, sir, has, it seems, discovered how the murderer disappears; for he has turned the statue in the monument outside, and found a passage behind it, into which he has this moment gone with four others.

Fos. Ay, a knavish statue.

And. (aside to Fosqué). Had you not better be gone? I will keep them in parley till you can get down the street.

Fos. And damn myself by running? Ha, ha! it is a very young man, this apprentice.

(A panel in the wall slides back, and SARGRAIS appears with a torch in his hand, closely followed by four Guards.)

Sar. Close the doors, and let no one leave the house. Take the torch, and bring in the chest we came upon in the passage.

(Exit two of them through the panel.)

1st Guard. This innocent, blushing apprentice, sir, has no doubt made good use of that passage.

Sar. If so, he has used it for the last time.

Steph. Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen, he has done nothing. We did not know any of us of this passage. André, tell them you know nothing of it—tell them so.

And. I cannot, for it would be a lie.

Steph. A lie!—a lie! In God's name, what do you mean?

(The chest has now been brought in, and is burst open; heaps of jewellery and gold-work roll out on the floor. STEPHANIE sinks down.)

And. Well, gentlemen, be brief. I am ready to confess anything you may require; but this is no place for such things. *(He points at STEPHANIE prostrate.)* My most honoured master, farewell; look to your daughter.

Fos. (to SARGRAIS). Stay, this man is to marry my daughter,

And. I thank you, sir, for your sorry jest. God may forgive you, I cannot.

Fos. A jest!—a jest? M. Sargrais, I must tell you that this young man never knows when I am in jest or when I am in earnest. I have said he shall marry her. Is it not enough? You silly jailers! can you not see that he is blushing while I am pale? It is better to blush than grow pale. Do you mark what I say? the man is innocent! I, I, Daniel Fosqué, have slain all men in the dead o' night who dared to rob me of my jewels. But I shall lose them all now, for they bury men naked by the roadside. Sirs, the dead are very, very poor. No gold there—no jewels there! No throbbing head there—no bursting heart-strings there! No love there—no little daughter there! *(STEPHANIE throws herself sobbing into his arms.)* Ah, God, no little daughter there! Shall I show you the knife that did the murders? Look for it in my corpse. *(He stabs himself and falls.)*

Steph. Oh, father, father, father!

Fos. Little one, think not too ill of me; think not, I pray you, too ill of me. *(He dies.)*

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART VIII.

CHAPTER XXX.—THE POET IN THE PROVINCES.

"COME to the 'Falcon,' Ralph, and sit down a little," said Jack Venables, with unwonted tenderness. "It does not matter much by what train we go back to town, since you can only go north by the night express."

But already beginning to recover from the shock which had stunned him, Ralph merely shook his head. And when Jack repeated the suggestion as they stepped ashore, he said, "No; movement is the best thing for me now. As yet, I dare not sit still and think."

Indeed the blow that had struck him so unseasonably was a heavy one, and might well shake his manhood for the moment. Yet though the contents of the telegram were most unexpected, there was nothing sensationally unnatural in them. The illness he had made light of had taken a serious turn. Mrs Leslie had an attack of inflammation of the lungs; and although, knowing all the circumstances, she had expressed no wish to see her son, yet the relative in attendance on her had felt bound to telegraph.

"Thank heaven, the telegram reached me in time," moaned Ralph, as he kept firm hold of Jack's arm. "Though I would to God Grace had not fainted. *He* knows I have enough to bear without that."

"As to Grace fainting," said Jack, "you could hardly have expected or wished anything else. Think how sudden it all was. The dear girl is not of iron, as you know; and you yourself, with all your nerve, have been very sufficiently shaken. Grief of that

kind does not hurt, and the worst that can possibly happen is that the pleasure of her voyage will be spoiled. She will remember, on second thoughts, that she leaves you in perfect health; and will look forward to your being soon reunited—possibly by the next steamer."

"It is not of Grace I am thinking," said poor Ralph, rather inconsistently, "it is my mother."

Though indeed his predominant feeling was one of bitter self-reproach, at having made light of the illness which he now exaggerated. Heartless and ungrateful son as he had been, he was very deservedly punished. There too, Jack, understanding his feelings, was ready to act the comforter, and he spoke with a decision of purpose that was not without its effect.

"My dear fellow, you see everything in sinister lights at present, and no wonder. But for your own sake, and for Grace's, and above all for Mrs Leslie's, do not give way to morbid self-reproach. You know as well as I, that no mortal could have foreseen this. Influenzas are of everyday occurrence, and you have always told me that your mother's constitution is excellent. You have nothing to reproach yourself with, and even now there is every reason to hope that her strength will throw off the illness. I know something of both your pluck and your Christianity. Take comfort and courage, and put your trust in Providence. In a few days you may look back upon all this as only a cause for gratitude. In a

few days Mrs Leslie may be pronounced out of danger. In a few days you will certainly have a reassuring telegram from Gibraltar, whither you can send any messages you please. Meantime, I need not tell you to be a man; but remember you have a journey before you, and a trying meeting at the end of it. You will dine with me quietly in my rooms, and I shall either see you safe off from King's Cross or go with you to Scotland, as you prefer."

Mr Venables felt rather abroad in the unfamiliar character of the preacher, but he was pleased to see the good effect of his words. Leslie did turn his thoughts to Providence, and resolved in calm acquiescence to brace himself for the better or the worse. With great external composure, though in profoundly melancholy mood, he entered the railway carriage with the rest of the party. Nor was that effort, though perhaps unnecessary, without its immediate reward. Sir Stamford, to whom Miss Winstanley had been paying court in the meantime, had been really touched by the tragic little incident to which she had given him the clue. With his many weaknesses, he was a good-natured man. He had taken an opportunity of whispering with his brother director; and on taking leave of Leslie in London, he stammered out some words he meant for sympathy, though he was embarrassed by having been bound over to secrecy. Then he added, that if Mr Leslie pleased to arrange matters with Mr Moray, the Board would gladly give him any reasonable leave of absence before taking up his appointment. So far as he could judge, on brief acquaintance, both the Board and the Resident would gladly submit to some temporary inconvenience,

to secure the assistance of so capable a gentleman.

Ralph made Sir Stamford a friend for life, by thanking him with real fervour. Indeed before the chairman knew that he was helping forward a true love-affair, it had struck him that a man of Leslie's stamp might have done much better, and that he was stooping to take this secretaryship in the far south. As for Leslie, the chairman's timely thoughtfulness came as a great relief. It would have added infinitely to the pains of suspense, had he feared that his appointment might be filled up in the meantime—had the sentence of separation been indefinitely protracted by depriving him of the reason for going to Sumatra as an inmate of the Resident's house.

He did not choose to let Jack accompany him to the north, but nevertheless he had a travelling companion. When poor Donald knew that it was Miss Grace who had fainted, he was thrown into terrible trouble. Swoons are serious things in the Highlands, where they mean the shattering of an oak rather than the bending of a sapling, and it took a good deal to reassure him. Then he transferred his anxiety to the young laird of Roodholm, with whom he had a fellow-feeling in the circumstances.

It might be that Mr Venables was right. He dared to say he knew a deal about many things. But if Miss Grace were but to twist her little finger, she was worth making a work about; and he liked Mr Leslie all the better for it, and him with his mind, too, "full of his mother."

Donald looked so wistfully forlorn when they reached London, that Jack willingly assented to a suggestion of Leslie's, and asked

him to join them at dinner in his rooms. When this humble friend understood that he was actually invited to sit down at table with "the gentlemen," although immensely flattered, he protested strongly and resisted stoutly. But Jack would not be denied; and he had a winningly commanding way with him in the circumstances.

"Hoot, Donald, man; it won't be the first time by many that you and Mr Leslie and I have eaten and drunk together. It's no use your saying that it was different on the hillside: so far as I can see, there isn't a hair of difference. Besides," he added confidentially, "you will be doing him a real kindness. He and I have had our cracks out; and we mustn't let him go on talking about melancholy subjects. You come and dine, and bring Bran, and we will carry him away among us to Loch Rosque and Glenconan, and freshen him up a bit for his travel."

"Then in troth, Mr Venables, I will do as you wish. But there was one other thing, sir, that I had been thinking of."

"What was that, Donald?"

"It was just this, sir. I was thinking that Mr Leslie would be lonesome-like through the night; and he's not looking altogether himself, moreover. And they'll be wanting me down at Glenconan; and I have done all that I came south to do, and seen as much as I had wished. So I was thinking that I would be taking the same train myself, if your honours had got nothing to say against it."

"But, Donald, my good fellow, you have never been in London before; and you must have a look round the sights before you go back again."

"'Deed, sir, and very truly, I have but small stomach for the sights; and it is a sore heart that this day has given me. No; I will be going back to the north this night, though I would not wish to be any trouble to Mr Leslie."

"Well, since you will have it, and between you and me, I really think it a capital idea. And when you come south on your next visit, as you shall do by-and-by, to me, and at my expense—mind that—we shall go and see everything that is worth the seeing. Who knows but you may meet Glenconan and Miss Grace? I should not be surprised for one. Somehow, I don't think they will be long away this time."

"And may God bless you for that word, sir," said Donald, grinning with delight. "And when that day does come, there's but one sight in London I should greatly care for."

To any one who knew nothing of the Highlanders, it would have been strange to see the keeper at the little dinner. A Southern of similar station would have sat awkwardly on the edge of his chair, eaten little, said less, and pained his companions by his awkward embarrassment. Donald Ross, in all essential respects, was the high-bred though simple-mannered Highland gentleman. It almost seemed as if he were trying to set his superiors at their ease, and very entirely he succeeded. Without putting himself forward in the least, he spoke manfully and modestly. Jack and he at first sustained the conversation; but Leslie, who had sat listening, gradually joined in. When he spoke of things in the north, of course Donald was at home; and when Jack drew him out on his impressions of travel and the metropolis, his quaint but intelligent re-

marks were irresistibly amusing. Nothing Venables could have devised could have done Leslie more good, or so quickly restored the manly tone of his mind. So much so, that when he was told of Donald's proposal, he was by no means too proud to acknowledge that he should be glad to have his stanch hill-friend as a travelling companion. "He and Bran are like things belonging to Grace," he said afterwards to Jack, half apologetically. But he made it a condition that Donald should spend the rest of his leave as a guest under his mother's roof at Roodholm.

"You won't have a merry time of it, Donald, worse luck; but I could never let you go by my doorstep. We do not meet with friends like you every day, and when we do come across them, we are bound to make much of them."

And if Donald could have made himself easy about Miss Grace, it was himself, as he might have said, would have been the happy man that night.

As for things at Roodholm, they were better than Leslie could have hoped. Thanks to her constitution and to excellent nursing, Mrs Leslie had been pronounced out of immediate danger. Leeches had pulled her through, but she was greatly weakened by the attack; for she had suffered much, and still suffered intensely, from the thought of the ruin she had innocently brought on her brother and his daughter.

"Were her mind once at ease, Mr Ralph," said the old country doctor, "she would want little of our medicine or yet of our looking after. As it is, and at her time of life, we will have an uphill job before we see her herself again; but you will be a better doctor than me, and it was just her sal-

vation that telegram catching you before you started."

Mr Ralph was much of the same opinion. His mother professed herself grieved at his having come back; at his having jeopardized his appointment, and separated from his cousin—for it need hardly be said that her maternal sagacity had long before penetrated the secret of his attachment. But each look and action contradicted the words, and her evident joy in his society, with the caresses that evinced it, more than repaid him for the sorrows of the separation. Moreover, as Jack had foretold, the telegram came from Gibraltar. Telegrams must be matter-of-fact things at best. Even if you cast considerations of economy to the winds, and launch out like the special correspondent of a crack journal, it is impossible to flash our finer feelings along the wires, submitting them to the scrutiny of telegraph officials and local postmasters. Yet Grace, with a woman's wit, and a loving girl's affectionate sympathy, had contrived so to word her despatch that her lover might read between the lines. They had been sadly disappointed, she said, but she was wonderfully well; and altogether he had every reason to be satisfied. There was no hope expressed of his joining them speedily; but that, as he felt, must have been out of the question. It was impossible that Grace, either directly or indirectly, should say anything to induce him to leave his mother's sick-bed. Next, in due course, came letters from Port Said, both from Moray and his daughter. The cordiality of the former, the more than cousinly warmth of the latter, left nothing indeed to desire. Moray spoke of his nephew and his regard for him, in terms more flattering than he had ever used before.

He could write in the circumstances as he never could have spoken. Not having his nephew's assistance on landing in Sumatra, he felt to be a grievous personal loss; but should Leslie see his way to carrying out their plans, his presence would be doubly welcome. As for Grace, though naturally she hinted nothing directly of the engagement which did not exist, she wrote almost in the character of a betrothed bride, longing to comfort a bereaved lover. And her gentle sympathy was almost more grateful than the assurances she insinuated of eternal fidelity. As Ralph read the note again and again, he was raised into a seventh heaven of delight: and he remembered the words of the sage Mr Venables, who had predicted precisely what had occurred. To be sure, on second thoughts he accused himself of heartlessness: did not his mother continue in a critical state? But after all, Mrs Leslie was steadily, if slowly, getting on: so long as he was with her, progress seemed probable; and he was determined of course that, cost what it might, he should stay by her till he had seen her health re-established.

So he set himself down and wrote a letter to Sir Stamford Scrapper, with something of the guile of the serpent, as well as the gentleness of the dove. He explained that for the present he was not his own master, although his mother had been pronounced out of danger, and was doing better than he could have hoped. He spoke of the enthusiasm with which he had entered the Company's service, and added that it would be with deep regret he should resign himself to renounce his prospects. He quoted a passage or two from his uncle's letter,

to indicate the Resident's feelings in the matter. He thanked Sir Stamford gratefully for his kind expressions when they had met and parted the other day; but added that he could not think of holding him to offers made under the pressure of kindly excitement.

The answer came in course of post, worded very much as our friend had expected. Each sentence was characteristic of the writer, as Leslie or any one else might have read him:—

"SUMATRA COLONISATION COMPANY,
303 LEADENHALL STREET.

"DEAR SIR,—I duly received yours of the 17th current. You will permit me to remark, that had we been better acquainted, you would probably have felt it unnecessary to make a proposition, which—as I am bound to say, and I trust you will forgive me for saying it—reflects in no inconsiderable degree on my character as a man of business and a gentleman. I never use words in matters of business without weighing them carefully; and as it has been my boast that my word is as good as my bond, I have never been known to go back from a promise. Having premised so much, in the way of essential self-vindication, I may add that otherwise your feelings do you the greatest credit, and confirm the high opinion I had formed of you, being, as I flatter myself, no indifferent judge of human nature. I said that we were desirous of securing your services, and I am glad to take this opportunity of repeating the statement. If you communicate with our secretary, and inform him of the address of your bankers, your pay will be placed duly to your credit in the meantime. The appointments begin from the day of your disembarking in the colony.

I learn with extreme gratification that your anxieties have been relieved with regard to your mother's illness,—and I have the honour, dear sir, to remain, &c., &c."

Pompous like himself as was the chairman's communication, the recipient was greatly pleased with it. His plans must depend on Mrs Leslie's health, but otherwise he was left master of his movements. Nor was the passage as to the pay the least agreeable part. The pay was not great, nor was Leslie a covetous man. But, as we know, he was sinking the bulk of his modest rental in a reserve fund against probable calls by the liquidators of the bank; and his ailing mother, who felt as strongly as himself on the subject, had been stinting her expenditure and retrenching on her jointure. He felt he could use this new source of income with a clear conscience—it might have puzzled him to say how he drew the distinction, but so it was—as he had not hesitated to spend his occasional literary gains. And now the thought of his unfinished poem occurred to him. He had leisure on his hands; he needed interest and occupation. He threw himself into the interrupted work with renewed energy, rising to it like a giant refreshed after his long literary repose. He was delighted to find that inspiration had not failed him; if it was less feverishly ardent, perhaps it was all the more healthy. Fresh from a long walk or ride, he would correct and revise the manuscript that had been flung aside from his feverish fingers in these vigils in Jermyn Street; and as he took up the threads he had dropped, and as he retwisted them, to his infinite satisfaction he admired his own work. In a rush of mingled and melancholy associations, he seemed

to recognise the vivid truthfulness of scenes and situations, and, above all, of the portraiture of himself and of her who had been at once the pole-star of his affections and his muse. He toned down the egotism, he touched up the traits of the muse, he chastened some of the more audaciously high-flown metaphors, and generally acted the unsparing critic. But the music of his verses went ringing through his soul, and the chords began to vibrate as before, though more calmly and none the less sweetly. He changed the manner of his treatment, though not the themes; and again, with the fancies fast gathering between times in his brain, his fingers flew over the paper. Working early, before his mother was visible—and late, after she and the household had retired to rest—he covered the ground at a pace which almost startled himself, and the work was rapidly drawing to a conclusion. Considering that the success of his smaller pieces had paved the way, he began to dream of fame and of growing popularity, and of driving more profitable bargains with the booksellers. Indeed one of these gentlemen, and not the least eminent in "the Row," chancing to hear confidentially and "accidentally," through Jack Venables, that the clever author of 'The Idylls of the North' had a new work on the stocks, had already sent him a diplomatic note on the subject, marked "private and confidential." And he hoped fondly that, in the course of a very few weeks, he might make his final arrangements in the matter, on his way through London to Sumatra. Should his 'Rosabelle' have the success he hoped, it would be doubly sweet to hear of it where his cousin, his bride, could wreath the laurels for his brow; while, on the other hand, should it turn out

that he had deceived himself, Grace —without a single spoken word might be trusted to console him —he absolutely confided in her for the disappointment. For now affection.

CHAPTER XXXI.—A LION IN LONDON.

Leslie went to London a month or two later, although not with the intention of starting immediately for Sumatra. His mother was still so delicate, that he did not dare to exile himself to the antipodes. With her son within reach, she was likely to mend and do well; but the shock of an indefinite separation might slowly though surely prove fatal. Not for the sake of Grace herself could he have left England under the circumstances. Meanwhile, and tolerably hopeful and contented, he had enough to occupy his mind. A second heavy call had been made by the bank liquidators, and under the fullest powers of attorney from his uncle, he had been realising assets to meet the payments. That was disagreeable, though not unexpected; and assuredly the business was eminently prosaic. But on the other hand, his poem was to appear, and his publishers were even more sanguine of success than the author. It had been submitted, *en petit comité*, to connoisseurs of name and critics of culture. The general verdict had been extraordinarily favourable, and even the objections were rather complimentary than disparaging. It was said that it shared the foolhardiness as well as the inspiration of genius: in the pride and intoxication of unusual power, the poet had ventured on liberties with the public, which the public might either resent or approve. All the same, anticipations in literary circles were excited, and expectations began to stand on tip-toe. The publishers had offered liberal terms, though contingent, in

some degree, on the success of the sale. Big men as they were, it was important to them that the book should succeed, and they had done their best to take their measures accordingly. It was to be brought out on the eve of the session, when the town was beginning to fill. And big men as they were, they did not altogether disdain the arts which the illustrious Mr Puff had reduced to a science in 'The Critic.' Editors and their literary contributors, half-confidentially admitted to pleasant little symposia, at which some pages from the poem gave a flavour to the claret, proud of being introduced to that *cercle intime*, printed paragraphs that were provocative when not positively flattering. In fact it seemed certain that the production of 'Rosabelle' would be a literary event, and it was only natural that the usually steady-going author should be as excited on the subject as many other people.

Then, setting empty vaingloriousness aside, a triumph seemed of no little consequence to him. Like Sir Walter Scott and other literary men of smaller stature, he had always set a low value on literary fame as compared to more practical successes. He had had the blessed good fortune to win his cousin's love—at least he hoped so; but if she cast in her lot with his, she sacrificed the brilliant worldly fortune which Jack Venables could certainly have offered her. He could never hope to make money like Mr Jack; but at all events, he might offer her something in compensation. Fame and

even flattery would be grateful to him, could he lay them as tributes at her feet. Moreover, high poetical fame in those days transformed itself into solid pudding. It was not as in the times when the Troubadours were merely a better sort of mendicants; when the Border minstrels and the Highland harpers were satisfied with a shake-down and "the run of the table." If he could cash a handsome cheque from his publishers before steaming to the south, and carry the assurance of some permanent income from his copyright, his arrival would be all the more welcome to Moray, and possibly none the less welcome to Grace; though he acquitted the goddess of his dreams of any possible mercenary motives.

So the imaginative and poetical side of his temperament was in the ascendant as the day approached when the poem was to appear. Lockhart tells us that Sir Walter, in similar circumstances, showed "a manly indifference to the fate of his literary bantlings," as when he went cruising with the Commissioners of Northern Lights among the Hebrides, when Waverley was about to issue from the Ballantyne Press. Leslie neither felt nor showed so much manly indifference; but he compromised. He took the Lake district on his way from the Lothians to London; and though it was in the very depth of an inclement winter, he went for some days beyond reach of letters, and refused to look at the metropolitan papers. It was an odd feeling that possessed him when, subsequently travelling south, he declined to deal with the newsboys at Lancaster or Rugby. He felt himself a fool; he called himself a coward: all the same he would defer the eventful moment. Yet his resolution was shaken and his mind in great measure set at

ease when he saw a poster of the 'Saturday Review' on Messrs Smith's bookstall at Rugby. The place of honour in the literary criticisms was given to 'Rosabelle, a Poem,' and the fact told much in his favour in every way. The Saturday Reviewers would surely never have rushed into the field, simply to anticipate the hangman's office, with a book that only deserved burning. And if by any chance they had gone out of the way to pillory him, they had given him an eminently complimentary advertisement in any case.

Unwontedly excited, rather thirsty than hungry, though the mercury stood at 28° Fahr., the ordinarily calm Leslie drove to Jack Venables's rooms. Jack had earnestly pressed a bed upon him; and Ralph, true to his system of self-sacrificing economy, had accepted the offer, though rather against his will. He loved independence before all things; but then Jack was always a great deal out of doors. And he was glad he had given his consent, when he saw his host's unmistakable pleasure. The snug dining-room, with its table spread for a *tête-à-tête* meal, was set out as for a little *fête*.

"My dear fellow," exclaimed Leslie, "you don't mean that you have kept yourself at home for my sake? you don't mean that you have put off your dinner till 9.30?"

"Hang it all, my dear Homer, let us have no mock modesty. It is not once in the lifetime of many men that it is given to a humble individual to welcome so distinguished a guest, my dear Dante, my dear Petrarch. I am not over-strong in poetry—I only re-echo what I hear on all sides, so you must forgive my confounding my complimentary epithets. You come with your blushing honours thick upon you; and upon my own

honour, I believe that they are still impalpable to the wearer. Can I conceive by any imaginary chance that you have looked at no papers on your way up from Cumberland?"

"That is exactly what I have not done; and now, for heaven's sake, drop hyperbole and be serious. To tell the truth, I am anxious about the book, and I am sure you don't want to trifle with me."

"Not for worlds, old fellow," said Jack, becoming serious at once. "Though I could hardly conceive," he added, with a smile, "your changing parts with me, and doing precisely what I might have done in such circumstances. Well, in a single word, you may have gone into the Lake country obscure, but you have come out to find yourself famous. Wordsworth had not a chance with you. Oh," he went on, in answer to a deprecatory gesture of Ralph's, "don't think I am chaffing. I don't pretend to arrange precedence between you and the poets' William—possibly he may survive as a classic when you have been shelved—all I say is, that he had to pull for a generation or so against the tide of public favour; while you, like Byron, have awakened to find yourself a celebrity. And how proud Grace will be! while even her father will feel he has drawn a prize in his son-in-law. But here comes the dinner in good time, and I for one am hungry enough."

Which was more than Leslie was. The good news, in the absence of all details, had pretty nearly deprived him of appetite. He drank of the carefully warmed claret more freely than was his wont: had it been cognac he might have been gulping it down without tasting it. They had changed the subject during dinner, but his

thoughts were far away; and Jack, while the servant was in the room, only talked for talking's sake. When the man left them to the decanters and the devilled biscuits, Jack stepped to the side-table and threw a dozen journals before Leslie. From the 'Times' down to the—from motives of prudence we will not say what—all had treated the poem with marvellous promptitude. One or two had hurriedly reviewed it the very day after publication. It might be due in great measure to the astute diplomacy of Messrs Tonson; all the same, it was a most sensational success for an almost maiden author. Leslie was quite quick-witted enough to see that those who were envious of long-established reputations had malevolently taken advantage of an opportunity to exalt a new aspirant. They condemned by contrast the ruggedness of one bard, who seemed like the Carthaginian hero to make his way through philosophical mountains by the free use of vinegar which set palates on edge. They pointed the moral of the mawkish sentimentality of another, who was descending the wrong side of the heights he had climbed, in the character of a lean and slippered pantaloon. Leslie's good sense felt that they were likely to make him ridiculous; but all the same, that he should have been raised to such a standard of comparison was flattering.

"So you see, my dear old fellow, you really are a celebrity," said Jack, who had been watching him as he ran over the pages with curious though affectionate sympathy. "Let me make the most of this evening, while I have you to myself. To-morrow, when you show yourself in Pall Mall or Paternoster Row, you will be caught up in a chariot of fire, which will

whirl you away to the heights of Olympus, in a Milky Way of cards of invitation."

"Confound the metaphors which you confound yourself, Jack. Seriously, I am very thankful for all this, though of course I know that all the flattery and exaggerated praise may only end in a reaction. I did think there was real stuff in the poem: so far I believe the reviewers to be in the right. In fact everything depended on how it struck their fancy. I was treading a bridge of Al Sirat, between praise and utter perdition. The chances of the cards have turned up trumps, and so far I am inexpressibly grateful. But, between ourselves, Messrs Tonson have been hard at work in all this; and you, who have had free admission behind the scenes, must know how much humbug there may be in a seeming triumph."

"Very likely. But there is no such smoke without poetic fire; and now that the hacks of Grub Street have been sent to the knacker's yard generations ago, no publishers in London have the critics at their command. Quite the contrary: and, so far as I have heard, it is the critics who sometimes sit upon the publishers. Let us allow, for the sake of argument, you are not quite the Homer or the Dante I hailed you, nevertheless you are a poet who, under extraordinary disadvantages, as you and I know, has given brilliant promise of some day arriving at immortality. Meantime, if you only make your hay while the sun shines, you are likely to have your bread pretty thickly buttered: meantime, too, you may have the run of the drawing-rooms and dinner-tables through the season as a lion of unrivalled pretensions and proportions: meantime, if you were not most unhappily pre-engaged, you

might make a wife of some well-tochered maiden in Mayfair."

Mr Venables spoke the truth; nor did his sagacity and his knowledge of the world deceive him. Within a fortnight after his arrival in town, the young rhymer of Roodholm had become a notoriety. The friendly head of his publishing firm, who knew everybody worth the knowing, gave a little dinner of eight in his honour. Lord Tancered offered him the choice of any number of his Mondays, at all or any of which he hoped to have the honour of seeing our northern friend at his breakfasts. He had applications from photographers to photograph him, and when these were civilly declined, a negative of a very unflattering *carte-de-visite* of his was produced somehow, freely reproduced, and industriously paraded in the shop-windows. Nor was that all. Having been persuaded to go to a dinner given in honour of the literary guild at the Mansion House, there he met Sir Stamford Scraper. It was nothing that Sir Stamford was demonstratively cordial—that might have been expected; but Sir Stamford begged the secretary to the Resident of Sarambang to name a day for dining with him, when "he would endeavour to get some people of distinction to meet him." Naturally Sir Stamford did not speak of agreeable people, but "people of distinction." That seemed a strange anomaly; it was something like the sun-god stooping from his sphere that the chairman of a great commercial corporation should actually arrange a dinner of "people of distinction," to meet the private secretary of one of the Company's *employés*. It was a phenomenon and an ominous sign of the times, when literature was coming to the front through the crowds of the worshippers of mam-

mon; and so Sir Stamford seemed to feel it. He overflowed with courtesy to his celebrated guest, and yet he was in a painfully false position. Presenting Leslie to Lord This or to Sir Cressus That, he dropped altogether the origin of their acquaintance. It was not the secretary of the Company in *partibus* that he was entertaining, but the illustrious young poet, "of whom, of course, you have heard," the owner of a good property in the Lothians. But when his guests took leave, after rather a pleasant evening, Sir Stamford laid a finger on Leslie's arm—

"Come down into my snuggerly for half an hour, Mr Leslie. I should be very glad to improve our acquaintance, and have a chat over a cigar before we turn in."

Leslie had become half an oriental by virtue of his engagement to the Company. And he might have answered, "To hear is to obey," in the language of the 'Arabian Nights.' He followed his "master" into the smoking-room, feeling himself in an oddly inconsistent position. His magnificent host had been almost toadying him, and yet the man had been his benefactor, and was still his patron.

Sir Stamford felt precisely similarly, though he approached the position from an opposite point of view. In a general way, he did not think much of poets: they seemed poor creatures, who had better be locked up at Colney Hatch, or in private lunatic asylums, if their families had the means of providing for them there. But this particular poet belonged to a peculiar species, and, in fact, appeared to be a phoenix. He was courted by peers and wealthy men; he was honoured at the Mansion-House table. Strange to say, he had a business-like head upon his shoulders, and was as much at home in figures as in hex-

ameters. And holding him to the engagement he must be thinking of throwing up would be an advantage to the Sumatra Colonisation Company, and a credit to Sir Stamford Scrapper. They did hold him, to be sure, by his attachment to Miss Moray; but that was a thread which might snap at any instant, when a score of other girls were sure to be dragging at it. Well, if the secretary once deliberately decided on it, he would break away in any case; if not, it might be well to strengthen the ground-tackle. For even if Mr Leslie still contemplated a voyage to the East, he might prefer to go in the capacity of the travelling gentleman. So Sir Stamford took the bull by the horns, and went bluntly to the point.

"I never suspected, as you may suppose," he said, awkwardly enough, "that Mr Moray, in appointing a secretary, was engaging a budding Milton. I scarcely like to suggest that you should stick to your engagement, and yet I should be extremely sorry were you to give it up. We need men of your talent in the East there; and I need not say it shall not be a trifle in the way of pecuniary arrangements that will stand against our continuing to count on your assistance."

Another man, puffed up with a new-born sense of importance, and foreseeing unexpected probabilities of filling his purse, might have resented the tone,—and Leslie was especially sensitive to any want of refinement. But he remembered that the pompous chairman had stood his friend, when the kindness that was offered had seemed all in all to him. Even now it might be much to him rejoining his love in a capacity that made him one of the family. The good wine might have had something to do

with it; but he resolved to take Sir Stamford into his confidence—and it was possibly the wisest thing he could have done.

"Perhaps you know enough of me already, Sir Stamford, to believe I shall do the best I can for you in every case. But for personal reasons, which you may possibly suspect, I am anxious to remain on the strength of your establishment. I trust that the state of my mother's health will admit of my starting for Sarambang very shortly. And if you will continue to allow me some licence about leaving, I shall

beg you to say nothing as to an increase of pay. I owe you a personal debt of gratitude."

"Say no more, my dear sir; say no more!" exclaimed Sir Stamford, in great jubilation. "You are one of the men whom no success can spoil; and you are such a treasure as the Company is too happy to possess. We are friends, I hope, from this night forward: it is I, the chairman, who tell you so; and neither you nor your uncle, nor yet that very pretty cousin of yours, shall have cause to regret your candour, if I can help it."

CHAPTER XXXII.—"JACK HAS AN INSPIRATION."

We should be doing Mr Venables injustice if we let it be supposed that he was in any way jealous of his friend's new-born fame. It was very much the reverse. Jack seemed to take Ralph's success as his own, and was never weary of sounding his praises. He began to correspond regularly with his cousin Grace, telling her much that Ralph's modesty suppressed; and he enclosed many laudatory articles from the newspapers, which the maiden might twist if she pleased into chaplets for her lover's brow. He insinuated delicately how, reading between the lines, Grace might see that Ralph was making her "famous by his pen." "And when he joins you in that savage principality of yours," Jack went on, "he is just the fellow, like the poetical marquis, to make you 'glorious with his sword.' Though I trust devoutly he may never have the chance: were it otherwise, I should volunteer for his travelling companion." Little did he think when he penned these light words, that circumstances would soon give them sinister meaning.

He wrote Moray too, and his letters to the man of action were the complement of those he dashed off to the young lady. Short, serious, and well considered, he dwelt upon the poet's phenomenal success, so far as both fame and lucre were concerned. "The better I know him, the more I love him: he is one of those fellows that no flattery can spoil, and of flattery he is likely to have more than enough. To me, who know his business qualities so well, it appears strange that any man can be so doubly gifted—so marvellously double-sided, if I may use the expression. Everybody in turn is eager to make a lion of him; but I need hardly say his heart is not in the Highlands, but in Sumatra. When he comes out to you, you will find him more modest than before—ready, as he is able, to help you in everything. Even that pompous old fool Sir Stamford admits that his going out as a subordinate is sending a razor-blade to do the work of a jungle-axe; but we know that the appointment is nominal and provisional; and as for Ralph, I need

hardly say, he would not exchange it to be Governor-General of India or the Grand Lama. In all sincerity, my dear uncle, had she sought the world over, my cousin could hardly have chosen more happily. She will marry a man among men, and the best of all possible husbands. In all sincerity I feel a double smart of sorrow and of shame, when I remember that I once put myself forward as his rival. But that is past and gone, and if I am not best man at the wedding, it will only be because, as I trust, he will soon get married in the Indies."

No: Mr Venables was far, indeed, from being envious. It was amusing and almost touching to see the friends together: Jack, respecting Leslie for his practical qualities, revered a genius which he felt to be removed above his sphere, and perhaps exaggerated the rarity of gifts to which he made no sort of pretension; while Ralph retained his old honest admiration for Jack as one of the fellows who seem born to succeed, by energy, audacity, and fertility of resource. Besides which, in the nobility of his own nature, he did even excessive justice to Jack's undoubted generosity. Here was a youth who, though honourable and high-spirited, had never made much pretence to very lofty principles. Thinking less of the means than of the ends at which he was driving, under such training as that of the veteran Winstanley he might well have become prematurely and most selfishly worldly. Yet what had Jack's conduct been towards himself? A consistent course of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice. If Jack did owe him a life, he had paid the debt a dozen times over. He had not only given him Grace, doing the utmost in his power to forward the marriage. But what

struck Ralph as almost more remarkable, Jack had laid aside the vanity and self-sufficiency which had once been his most conspicuous foibles. In their familiar relations, he had fallen so entirely into the second place, that Leslie was often positively embarrassed by the tacit flattery which was so obviously sincere. While, when they were together in public, Jack almost forgot himself, and was always pushing his modest friend to the front, till Leslie would feel bound to move and speak, simply that he might escape the well-intended pressure. In fact, the pair were become a Pylades and Orestes, though with none of the effusiveness of these heroes of classical tragedy.

No: Mr Venables was so far from being envious, that he was rather revolving like a modest satellite round the new constellation that had arisen above the literary horizon. Or, to change the figure, if he was not resting on his oars—for inaction was abhorrent to his active nature—he had never before taken his pulling so leisurely. And he might have taken things as quietly for some time longer, to go off sooner or later in one of his spurts, had it not been for somebody who was beginning to work upon him, though as yet he was unconscious of the influence.

Julia Winstanley was a handsome girl, and Jack and she, as I have said, had always lived in the utmost good-fellowship. But Jack, with all his energy, was one of the men who feel bound to give vent to the affections in some shape. He indulged in flirtations when pretty girls crossed his path, just as he was civil to City men on principle. But he craved for something better and more comforting; and when he longed for consolation after losing Grace, he

began to feel the necessity of filling the void. It had never occurred to him to make love to Julia Winstanley, although undoubtedly there were great temptations, and worldly wisdom might have whispered that it was advisable. But somehow he sought her society more, and the opportunities presented themselves each hour of the day; while Miss Winstanley, who was Jack's junior by only eighteen months, felt herself to be filling the place of a mother to him. She had been much pleased by his conduct at Glenconan, where he had anticipated her wishes by offering himself to Grace, and by placing his means and his prospects at the disposition of Grace's father. She had been no less pleased by the resignation with which he had let Grace go; and by the manly firmness he had displayed in his character of rejected admirer. And she had appreciated, if she could not altogether understand, the generosity with which he had been singing the praises of Leslie.

All the same, she came to the conclusion that that sort of thing had been carried quite far enough. Leslie was the special property of her friend Grace, and heaven knew that she did not grudge the poet to the exile. But then Jack Venables was likewise a friend: the *protégé* in some sense of herself as well as her father: and it seemed to her high time that Jack should assert himself by another of those *coups* which had gone so far to advance him.

Considering the direction whither their friendship was apparently tending, it was one of the ordinary pieces of luck of this favourite of fortune that he should have snatched the game out of Miss Winstanley's hands. It is true that it was she who gave the hint

on which he chivalrously acted, and that she consequently came to regard his exploit as that of a champion vowed to her service.

The hint came casually of a conversation at a little dinner at Lord Wrekin's. The Lord President of the Council entertained one or two of his illustrious colleagues, with his brother, his sister-in-law, and their daughter. The private secretary was there, almost as a matter of course. Eight people were seated at a round table, so equally of course the conversation had become general. The Ministry of the day was, at the moment, by no means in exuberant spirits. By-elections had been going against them: and opposition and independent journals alike had been arguing, with great plausibility, that the drift of public opinion was setting steadily against the Government policy. In ordinary circumstances Lord Wrekin would have cared little. He was a Whig of the ancient Whigs; the Cabinet was far too Radical to please him, and he would really rather have voted any day with Lord Salisbury than with Lord Granville. But he clung to his office, for he loved its dignity; the drift of the elections disgusted him—and he had spoken his mind pretty strongly.

"All very true," remarked the War Minister. "But as you know, we cannot help ourselves in the meantime. The time for a stand may come, meanwhile we can only temporise. But I agree that this run of ill luck in the constituencies is singularly unfortunate. There is Ballyslattery too; that must go to the Home-Rulers of course: not that it greatly signifies, since no one looks for anything else. By the by, I ought, perhaps, to beg your pardon for touching on the subject, since your

family had so much to say to it before the Ballot Bill."

Indeed it was a sore subject with Lord Wrekin. Ballyslattery was a small seaport in Wexford county, which used to thrive *tant bien que mal* by its smuggling rather than its deep-sea fishing. The Winstanleys had considerable property in the neighbourhood; and they divided the leaseholds and the influence in the borough with the O'Geoghans, an ancient sept of the aboriginal Celts, who were likewise large landowners. By an amicable arrangement, one family and the other had always returned alternate members for the town. But the O'Geoghans had beggared themselves as the Winstanleys had grown wealthier; and in the latter times before the Land League agitation and the ballot, Ballyslattery had become pretty nearly a pocket-borough. The Winstanleys had always had to nurse and to canvass, but with canvassing and nursing they carried their man. Nowadays all that had been changed. There was a small and respectable minority of voters who bitterly regretted the old state of things. For nowadays, if you wished to give a dog—or a candidate—a bad name, you had only to send him into the streets at election time in a collar bearing Lord Wrekin's badge.

"Ay! there is Ballyslattery!" ejaculated the host, with a wry face, as if he had washed down a bad olive with a mouthful of corked Lafitte. "There is Ballyslattery, a borough that, as I may say, we made. I should be in easier circumstances to-day, Wilfred, as you know," turning to his brother, "had not our father spent a little fortune on the place. He did half the harbour-works at his own expense; he wrung a vote out of the Melbourne Cabinet, which built

the breakwater, and made Ballyslattery almost a harbour of refuge. And Wilfred there, among the other irons he keeps in the fire, has been promoting lines of packets to the Bristol Channel."

"Nor have I done very badly with them," remarked Wilfred, parenthetically.

"That may be," rejoined his brother, peevishly. "Trust you for always knowing on which side to butter your bread. Anyhow, we Winstanleys have made Ballyslattery, and from being a rickle of weather-beaten hovels, it has become a respectable and civilised town. What is our reward? We got it a municipal charter, by the way, and the watchword of the corporation is 'war to the knife' with the family of Winstanley. The present mayor is the very Phelim O'Callaghan, whom we had prosecuted, fined, and imprisoned for smuggling."

"No bad reason for his being in bitter opposition," thought Jack, though the Minister at War was civilly sympathetic.

"The long and the short of it is, that for the forthcoming election there are no fewer than four candidates, and each and every one of the four abuses me more savagely than the others."

"Who may they be, and what are their politics?" inquired the mild-spoken Minister of Public Education, who had been modestly waiting to put in a word.

"Who are they, and what are their politics? Why, first, to give place to rank and descent, there is Cornelius O'Geoghan, a cadet of that fraternity of mendicants who fights for his own hand and for some State provision; who has not the faintest chance of coming in; but who will, nevertheless, have considerable support from out-voters in the suburban baronies. Then

there is Bodkin, the editor and proprietor of the 'Ballyslattery Watchfire,' who preaches sedition, who believes in nothing, but who may have more or less backing from the subscribers to his journal. There is Blake, who believes in everything; who had a visitation from the Virgin only last year; who would revive the Inquisition, should he ever have the chance; and who is the pet of the bishop and the superior clergy. But the man who will indubitably win, is an assistant-secretary and book-keeper from the late Land League offices in Dublin. Timothy Regan is his confounded name: he is the son and the pupil of a hedge-school-master; he was locked up for half a year in a lunatic ward in Swift's hospital; he came out to stump the county of Wexford, and to agitate behind the bars in the Dublin public-houses. He is a *protégé* of Parnell's; he is the darling of his fellow-countrymen; and he will infallibly be sent up to Westminster as a senator, to shelter behind the privileges of Parliament, and be treated as a gentleman by the Speaker."

The War Minister having said something commonplace and calming, discreetly let the subject drop. Lord Wrekin, remembering that he had uncourteously excited himself, was only too glad to let it go. After all, the loss of their seat of Ballyslattery was one of those irremediable evils that must be acquiesced in.

But his niece had been knitting her brows, and had gone into the drawing-room, pensive and abstracted. It was but natural that Mr Venables should be attracted to her side, seeing that they were the only two young people in the party.

"What do you think of it?" she asked, abruptly.

"Think of what?"

"Why, of this Ballyslattery election."

"What should I think of it, unless that if any Saxon wished to test the thickness of his skull, he had better be present there at the nomination or on annunciation day!"

"Oh," was all Miss Winstanley's answer; and she took to turning over a volume of etchings on which she proceeded to comment; nor did she deign one other word on the election, neither to the surprise nor the perplexity of Mr Venables.

Next morning he presented himself to his patron and official chief before the breakfast things had been cleared away.

"Are there any fresh news about the Irish election?" was his first question.

"Nothing of consequence. How should there be? Only, another candidate has come forward, professing dynamite doctrines, which will probably bring him within the clutch of the police. I have a telegram from my agent."

"Ah well, my lord, I come to propose a sixth candidate,—to ask a letter to your agent, which may be an answer to his telegram, and to beg a short leave of absence."

"No, no, my dear Mr Venables," answered his lordship, after some moments of reflection—"no, no; it will never do. You would only make a fool of yourself, and get your head broken several times over."

"With all deference to your local knowledge, and to your greater experience, I am by no means so sure of that, my lord. After what you told us last night, the conflicting interests seem to be so many and so various, that any one really Conservative, though he might call himself Whig, should have a fair chance of slipping in."

Jack paused for a moment over this ambiguous profession of political faith; but Lord Wrekin merely smiled. Member of her Majesty's Government as he was, his own opinions were not far removed from those of the Carlton, and he felt with Jack that the days were drawing nigh when genuine Conservatism arrayed against Radicalism and Socialism might meet at a great battle of Armageddon.

Jack marked the smile and went on.

"As you said last night, the candidate of the Parnellites appears to be the only one who is really dangerous. May I ask, by the way, for it is of vital importance, whether your agent has both brains and courage; whether he is a man with pluck as well as sagacity?"

"Fitzgerald has both. I can answer for him."

"Very well; then all should be comparatively smooth sailing. We contrive to keep the rival candidates in the field, or most of them, which is *de bonne guerre*, and strictly honourable as political strategy, and we fight this seat of Ballyslattery by bringing each in-

dependent voter to the poll who dreads the prospect of proscription and a war of races, and objects to sending up a delegate of the dregs of the populace."

"Whether you win or lose, you will assuredly have your head broken, my good boy."

"Forgive me if I remind you that that is my affair. I hope my head may be patched up before the expiration of my leave of absence. Seriously, Lord Wrekin, I believe I can snatch the seat, and it is worth risking something in so good a cause."

Lord Wrekin was not prepared to dispute that proposition. After all, Jack, though a useful secretary, was his secretary and not his son. And had he been his son and heir, as he told himself very nobly, he would never have scrupled to venture him on such a forlorn-hope—especially had he gone fighting the battle of the Winstanleys. If he did not give him his blessing, he yielded assent; he gave him good wishes and letters of introduction; and he insisted, moreover, as matter of business between man and man, on opening Jack a credit with the family bankers.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE BATTLE OF BALLYSLATTERY.

I shall be brief with the Ballyslattery election, for it is but an episode, as I am aware; but then it is an episode with a bearing on the story. For Jack fought the battle less from ambition or as a political gladiator, than as the champion of a fair lady. And whether he should decide to profit by his devotion or not, his chivalrous adventure gained him both gratitude and admiration.

It only wanted five days of the nomination, and the citizens of

the flourishing Wexford seaport were already in extremely warm water, fast poppling up to the boiling-point. The police had been strengthened by drafts from the surrounding districts; and two additional companies of the second battalion of the Mid-Lothian Regiment had taken up their quarters in the rambling barracks. Notwithstanding which, the playful spirit of the local politicians was breaking bounds night after night. It was breaking

windows as well, as the electors suspected of constitutional leanings found to their cost; and heaven only knew what might happen. "Glory be to God!" ejaculated the corporation of the glaziers piously, rubbing their hands over incalculable reparations of damages, as the "boys" grew more boisterous. At dozens of public meetings, held day after day, agitators ranted and raved on the platforms. Morning, noon, and night, the drink was flowing at the public-houses, as if a corps of Bacchuses, come straight down from Olympus, were bestriding the casks and turning on the taps *ad libitum*.

One fine spring evening, when the excitement was nearly at its height, a traveller, as the older novelists say, might have been seen stepping out of the train at the Ballyslattery platform. Little did the car-driver who carried off the stranger, with hand-bag, hat-box, and portmanteau, after a free fight with his comrades, suspect the personality or the purposes of his fare. Otherwise our friend Jack Venables would have been undoubtedly "spilt" or "kilt," and very possibly both, in place of being safely delivered at his destination, which was the comfortable mansion of Mr Fitzgerald, Lord Wrekin's confidential agent. But though his advent was unannounced to the town, sundry telegrams in cipher had preceded him. Mr Fitzgerald, who was a man of convictions as well as courage, gave his guest the most cordial reception; but as time was precious, while conducting him to the supper-table, he was already explaining what had been done.

"The presses of 'The Mercury,'—that's our moderate Ministerial paper—have been at work, and the address you forwarded by message"

—a special messenger had been sent on with letters, twelve hours in advance of the traveller—"is all ready to be quietly posted up, as soon as the good people are gone to bed. You seem to have used the cayenne-pepper-castor pretty freely, by the way, Mr Venables."

"Too freely, I fear, for your comfort, Mr Fitzgerald."

"Well, so far as that goes, my foot is set down. The dice were cast when his lordship decided to send us a candidate, and I made up my mind to stand the hazard of the die. After all, I don't know that it greatly signifies. I was hardly on a bed of roses before; and if I do multiply my enemies, it scarcely matters. We Irish agents are used to being shot at, as the eels are used to skinning. But with you, who are less in the habit of these political amenities, it is a different matter."

"It is a different matter indeed," exclaimed Jack, suspending his attack on a cold sirloin. "It is a different matter, for you will be left to bear the brunt of the animosities I provoke for a day or two, under the protection of soldiers and police. On my word, I feel like a cur that cuts in to snatch a bone, and whether he mouths it or misses it, makes a bolt with his tail between his legs."

"Faith, sir, a missile, or a charge of slugs, may reach you before you can get clear away. But as for my danger, don't speak of it again. What is your pleasure is my duty. And not to be inhospitable, when you are done with your supper, we must decide on the measures with which we shall open the campaign."

Next morning the electors of Ballyslattery were rubbing their eyes, and trying to clear away

the cobwebs from whisky-sodden brains. Could it be a mirage reflected from the spirits swallowed the night before; or was it possible that a Conservative or "a bloody and brutal Whig"—practically the same thing—was come to contest the borough of Ballyslattery? There were blue and yellow posters flaunting from each wall and each street-corner; and some dirty Saxon, who dared to declare himself against Home Rule, was tampering with the freedom of Irish election.

"Sure and it's he who would have the bad chance, if the boys were to come across him," was the philosophical sentiment of a venerable patriarch who had cheered O'Connell and conspired with Smith O'Brien, though years had cooled his blood, spite of perpetual infusions of poteen.

"It's Fitzgerald that the boys would be daling with, — to his sowl," remarked the more practically minded Dennis O'Dempsey, landlord of the Cat and the Bagpipes. "It's Fitzgerald that is at the bottom of it, and by the powers——"

When Mr O'Dempsey, remembering prudence, wound up his sentence in dumb show, by a whistle and a movement of his forefinger.

These two significant ejaculations may give an idea of the state of popular feeling. The mob simply swore to murder their Saxon invader, and to take measures to picket the polling-stations against the votes of the English and the "thraitors." But as the police and "the army" were likely to make counter-demonstrations, and as some of the minority of the respectable might have resolution enough to record their votes under cover of the bayonets and the ballot, the cooler heads among

the seditious met to hold council together.

"We have got five men in the field among us," said the worthy Father Dennis, who had taken Mr Blake under his especial protection,— "we have got five men in the field among us; and, all allowances made, to say the least of it, that is two too many."

"And if your reverence is manning me," retorted Bodkin, the unbeliever, ruffling up his plumes like a game-cock that is challenged, "you wor never more mistaken, and it is much to say, than when you dramed that it was the like of me would be thinking of withdrawing."

As for Mr Regan, as the *protégé* of Mr Parnell, he felt confident of the place he was competing for, and had already discounted the pay, in bright visions of the imagination. While the remaining candidates, knowing well in their hearts that they had no chance, determined to put spokes in the wheels of their enemies.

The council was composed of the *prud'hommes* of the place: it embodied all the virtue and the wisdom of local patriotism. And the upshot of their proceedings was embodied in a resolution, moved by Mr O'Teague, a student of the Cork College, and one of the most fervid expositors of the advanced ideas of Young Ireland—

"As this Mr Venables has come among us—and may the divil recaive his sowl!—as if he wor expectin' that we would be prowd and happy to return him, I am of opinion that we should show our sensibility to his poloiteness by giving him another competitor to compate with. It's myself that will issue an address to the free and independent electors, and now he will have five of us to fight with in place of four."

And O'Teague stuck to his logical determination. Strange to say, he gathered a considerable tail of supporters, who applauded the sagacious stroke of patriotism to the echo. If Jack Venables had paid him—and his enemies swore afterwards that he had done so—O'Teague could not have more effectually played into his hands.

The nomination day was a great day in Ballyslattery. The population had been in a state of chronic intoxication for a week before; but the spirits had boiled their blood without sapping their physical energies. The authorities had made formidable preparations. There was an immense force of police, mounted and on foot. The Mid-Lothian Regiment was strategically distributed, so as to take up commanding positions where they were free to act; while sundry troops of the Lancers formed in sections of equestrian statues in certain open spaces. But on the other hand, the back streets and the tortuous lanes of the town were given over to gangs of the "boys." Bands of sturdy rustics, drafted from the country districts for the occasion, were marshalled under local leaders with their "slips of blackthorns" in their fists. The amphibious population of fishermen, with many seafaring sympathisers, had come ashore. Some of them were armed with cudgels or boat-stretchers; not a few with improvised pikes or with cutlasses. The hobbledehoy of the alleys mustered strong in their wake; while behind the hobbledehoy came the school-urchins, with their pockets or their waist-bands so many small arsenals of stones, and skilled, like David, in slinging and stone-throwing. And all these were waiting for the proceedings to begin, that they might claim their due shares in the ceremony.

It might have all seemed very natural to a native-born Wexford man; but it struck a stranger as peculiar. So, perhaps, we may as well quote a passage or two from the Venables correspondence; for, according to promise, Jack dashed off hasty despatches each night to his friend Ralph Leslie as well as to Miss Winstanley.

The latter were perhaps the more confidential as to his innermost feelings; but as the former were more frank as to the perils which he faced, we shall fall back upon them in preference.

"DEAR RALPH,— . . .

"You have never been cast away and shipwrecked as I have been. Worse luck for you and me, for in that case I might have spared you a detailed description of the nomination scene. You have never heard the wild winds howling and shrieking through shrouds and stays, while the roaring breakers were chafing against the shore—with, by the by, the bellowing of a deck-load of maddened cattle thrown in by way of aggravation! I assure you, when I made my appearance in the streets, before the hour of noon the day before yesterday, I was carried back in the spirit to the 'Kittiewake's Neb.' The procession of the Ministerialist candidate was very like a tadpole—with a head, little body, and a great deal of tail. Fitzgerald and a few stanch gentlemen and people of business stood by me like men. More credit to them, for I fear they may smart sorely for it. Most folks who had any decent excuses sent them instead of coming. Small blame to them. We were preceded, not by a band, but by a strong body of police. Mounted policemen mustered on each side of us; and another small cohort of blue-coated footmen brought up

the rear. Each open space was occupied by troops, hemmed in by mixed mobs of ruffians, with their Megera-like women and their squalling brats.

"The yelling, hooting, cursing, the cries of grief and hate, might have been heard to any imaginable distance. Appius Claudius, or Warren Hastings under the blighting invective of Burke, could hardly have shrunk—morally—more pitably than I did. To be sure there were occasional showers of stones, coming by way of distraction from the execrations and blasphemies. But I was braced by the very audacity of the abuse and assaults, and 'Richard was himself again,' when I stood forward upon the platform. It was just as well, for even Wirtz or Gustave Doré in their nightmares of inspiration could hardly conceive more fiend-like forms than those before which we found ourselves. My opponents snapped and snarled among themselves; but it was for me, and more especially for poor Fitzgerald, they reserved the most venomous atrocities and the gnashing of their teeth.

"You may fancy I might have been stunned and muzzled. Quite the contrary. You have no idea how easy it is being eloquent under such circumstances. Had I routed through the horn of a wild bull on the platform, the sound would never have reached the second ranks in the crowd. I merely moved my lips and stooped towards the reporter at my elbow, ducking occasionally to dodge a stone or a dead cat. The reporter, sitting under an umbrella quilted with tin plates, pretended to lend an ear, and made fictitious play with his pencil. He had my eloquence cut and dry in his pocket, and had already telegraphed it. It will appear at length in the Ministerial journals

of Dublin, and will be strained down into paragraphs for the letters to the London press. . . . I understand something of the feelings of the first of the martyrs, and await anxiously and in strict seclusion the declaration of the poll."

A second extract from a letter, bearing date two days subsequently :—

"It was pretty warm with us, as you may remember, on the nomination; but the fires were seven times heated for the declaration of the poll. When you saw by telegram that I had snatched a scratch victory by three votes, you may have formed a conception of the popular reception of the result. But in this Irish atmosphere one comes to be acclimated to blasphemies. The mixed multitude of savages before the hustings cast all self-control to the winds. Decently dressed men, farmers in frieze coats, and shopkeepers in broadcloth, like those whose rags were skewered on to them by a single pin, seemed to be alike possessed by legions of demons. Had it not been for the muster of the soldiers and the police, they would have joined their friends on the platform with a rush, and torn me and my handful of backers into ribbons. Still, happily for us, they deemed discretion the better part of valour; and it is strange, indeed, that the Celts, with their personal pluck, should lose heart in a crowd like so many curs that are collared. To be sure, after a time of howling, they warmed up into action, and a corps of rapscallions made an aggressive demonstration. Police and soldiers were half paralysed; for, as no magistrate had cared to read the Riot Act, they did not choose to use carbines and revolvers. Then I remarked the beauty of

the weapons of the Lancers as comparatively harmless arms for repressing a Hibernian riot. The men charged in loose formation with the lance; their assailants took refuge under the upturned carts and handbarrows that filled the market-place. They were poked and thrust at good-humouredly enough, considering the provocation they had offered to the troopers—many of whom had been bruised and battered by the stones. Then—will you believe it?—this extraordinary people, who had been like unchained savages only the minute before, began to laugh and recover their good-humour, as if they had been pleasantly tickled by the points of the lances. I fancy it is the sort of fun that comes home to them; and there is more delicacy in such repartees than in the blows of their black-thorn cudgels. . . . At all events, I come back to you the member for Ballyslattery; and assuredly there was no corruption to unseat me, though there may have been something approaching to intimidation on the other side; and as I have not the faintest prospect of re-election, no possible pressure from my constituents can influence my parliamentary action. I am only sorry for poor Fitzgerald, who has stood by me like a brick. But what can I, or what, indeed, can Lord Wrekin, do for him, unless his lordship gave him his dismissal with a pension? and then

he would never consent to expatriate himself. Neither you nor I had any idea, my dear Ralph, of what the men must resign themselves to who stand in the breach between the English garrison and the disloyalists who beleaguer it."

Jack hurried back to town, bearing his blushing honours, as well as sundry bruises he had received in the flying storms of stones. He took his departure by a late train on the very day of the declaration of the poll. He was loath to seem to leave Fitzgerald in the lurch; but that gentleman sensibly pointed out that his going might possibly allay popular excitement, while his remaining would certainly excite it to madness. So our triumphant young friend was escorted to the train by a serried phalanx of police and a couple of squadrons of cavalry. "Had I been the Pope or the Sultan, they could not have treated me with greater distinction," he remarked, as, following portmanteau and hand-bag, he passed between the triple ranks of the gallant Mid-Lothian men, drawn up to right and left before the station. And even higher honours were in store for him, as he learned later. That night his constituents, with the non-electors, rose almost *en masse* to burn their new member in effigy; and on the following Sunday he was solemnly cursed with book, bell, and candle, from half the altars in the diocese of Ballyslattery.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—STARTLING INTELLIGENCE FROM SANGA.

The managing director or Resident of the Sumatra Company at Sanga had, on the whole, a pleasant voyage to Penang. He had started in considerable ignorance of the territory he was sent to administer, though he knew a good deal

about the trade he was to direct. But his Company had furnished him with ample materials to study, and these he had supplemented by a travelling library, which was well selected, if small. Reading early and late, and in his perpetual

intervals of leisure, he had primed himself as to the facts that concerned him; and he communicated the information he acquired to his daughter, who was naturally curious as to the future to which they had hopefully committed themselves.

I have no idea of boring my readers with the facts, the fallacies, and the statistics to which Grace, like Desdemona, seriously inclined her ear. Briefly, the broad district of Sanga had been transferred to the Company by the Sultan of Sarambang. Sarambang is a wild State in Sumatra, lying nearly opposite to Perak, in the Malay Peninsula. To the north and west is the independent State of Achin; to the south and the east are the lands of sundry savage races under the shadowy suzerainty of the kingdom of Holland. According to a Malay proverb, which we venture to translate freely into our vernacular, Kulong Hassim, Sultan of Sarambang, found himself between the devil and the deep sea. The pirate fleets of the Achinese were ravaging his coasts, carrying women and children into captivity. Not that there was a pin to choose between the Achinese and the Sarambangese; but his people, being the weaker, were being pushed to the wall. While, on the other hand, being cute, he shrewdly suspected that it might occur to the Dutch to champion his cause, whether he would or not. In which case, whoever might swallow the oyster, it was pretty sure he would be left with nothing but the shells. In those circumstances, he had listened willingly to an English adventurer, who had come to Sarambang ostensibly for shooting. His district of Sanga lay remote to the south, and its shores were being perpetually swept by descents of piratical Dyaks. He must either

defend it or give it up. As he could not do the former, he decided on the latter, more especially as Colonel Chamberlain made him a tempting offer. The Sultan practically sold an indefinite liferent of a district geographically defined by certain rivers, and carrying a scattered population of over 100,000 souls. The stipulated price was a trifle of money down, with a moderate royalty on all the profits which the English settlers might realise. Chamberlain's bargain was speculative but good; nor was the bargain by any means bad for the Sultan. Anything he might subsequently make of the contract was so much clear gain; and the politic Chamberlain had really made him a sleeping partner, with a heavy stake in the prosperity of the foreign settlers. If Kulong Hassim could do little to help them, at all events he would show them something more than a benevolent neutrality. Colonel Chamberlain brought his concession to London, where he finally came to terms about it with Sir Stamford Scraper. The hopes he flashed before the eyes of the promoter were dazzling; for he spoke of coal-fields and the precious metals, and unlimited crops of spices, sugar, coffee, and cotton. What with his plausibility, what with the specimens he showed, what with reference to geographical authorities, and to travellers who had written of the Malay Peninsula, he had little difficulty in making his bargain with Sir Stamford; the rather that he took the money he stipulated for in paid-up shares, making it a *sine qua non* that he was to be appointed managing director. I may say at once that I should hardly call Chamberlain an enthusiast; since there could be no question as to the intrinsic value of his concession. The doubt was, whe-

ther the English company could *exploiter* it, owing to the unsettled condition of those seas and their coasts. However, there was a precedent in Rajah Brooke's success at Sarawak. There was good fighting material among the Malays within the bounds of Sanga, who would rejoice in the security from aggression that might be given by a strong government; and on that Colonel Chamberlain pinned his faith. Though more of a sportsman and speculator than an administrator, he had discharged his unfamiliar responsibilities fairly well. He had founded the settlement of Sanga on the Sanga river, and fortified it with stockades; he had imported a few skilled European artisans, one or two capable clerks to keep his accounts, and sundry respectable non-commissioned officers to drill his coffee-coloured levies. He had begun to open up and develop his resources; he had fought sundry piratical fleets, and succeeded in beating them off; he had been habituating his Malay subjects to the pleasures of working for regular pay; and he had seen a steamer—the Sir Stamford Scraper—sent out to him, which might ply between the settlement and Penang or other ports. Finally, the unlucky Chamberlain had caught a fever and died, in the nick of time for any interest in my story, just as Glenconan with his fortunes seemed to have been cast hopelessly adrift.

So Glenconan and his daughter had had an agreeable passage, and they had transhipped themselves at Penang to the Sir Stamford Scraper, which had comethither by appointment to meet the Resident.

The curtain that dropped on Grace falling back in a faint on the deck of the Fire King in the fogs from the Essex marshes,

rises on her as she is approaching Sanga and the shores of the promised land. The rise of the curtain was the literal fact, for there is little difference between fog and fog, whether it hangs on the lower reaches of the Thames or over the mangrove-swamps of Sumatra. But what suddenness in the difference when the southern sun breaks out! It is the broad blaze of the balefire on some Border height, to the flickering of a farthing candle in a cellar in the Seven Dials. Let Miss Grace tell her own story, as Mr Venables has done. I quote from a five-sheet letter to Miss Winstanley.

"It was with a sinking and a saddening of the heart I came on deck a little after dawn. Creeping, clinging vapours enveloped everything, weighing down the black smoke from the funnel of the steamer. It was a dimness that might be felt and almost tasted, for it came with the breath of mud and malaria and decaying vegetable matters. Shall I say, that when the steward threw a little glass of cognac into the coffee, I swallowed it as I have smelled a scent-bottle in a crowded church?

"Then, of a sudden, the grey vapours began to thin, wreathing themselves round the masts and the yards, and coming down on our heads in a drizzle; while away to the eastward was a flashing of rosy lights, like the flashes of the aurora borealis through the grimmest of wintry skies. Almost before I could rub my eyes over the phenomenon, the rosy reflections that had been radiating like revolving lights had widened into one deep, broad blaze of crimson. The sun of the tropics had broken out in his strength, and the mists melted away or evaporated as by enchantment. The mouth of the Sanga river lay before us, with the surf breaking over the troubled

bar ; and the smooth, heaving swell of the black channels, lying between the surge of the snow-drifts. To right and left were the thickets of mangroves, casting their gloomy shadows over sand-banks and mud-flats. But behind were the copses of feathery palms, and the clusters of the graceful bamboo columns, bending beneath the burdens of their glossy coronets of leaves. While behind all, and in the distance, was the wooded amphitheatre of mountains, their heads and shoulders rising in volcanic nakedness out of the flowing draperies of the forests that fell from their stony girdles in folds of green. I cannot help being romantic and poetical, my dear Julia, for never surely did mortal maiden look on a more glorious panorama.

"But to come back to the prosaic from the poetical, a steam-launch was puffing and wheezing alongside, in place of one of those most picturesque prahus, which seem to embody the very melody of motion. Perhaps we crossed the bar all the more easily, and we steamed up the sluggish stream very comfortably. To adopt a simile of Sir Walter Scott's, it was like threading an interminable aisle, under the leafy roof of one of the grandest of natural cathedrals. Long rows and groups of graceful columns shot up on either bank — the stems of trees that were absolutely branchless to the height of 80 or 100 feet. Then indeed in their exuberance they made up for lost time, interlacing themselves in impenetrable arches of foliage, the light filtering through at intervals, as from a roof in disrepair, and falling in light shreds and patches on the black surface of the stream. But the silence of that tropical forest was death-like. There might have been beasts or birds : I saw not a single one, ex-

cept here and there a solitary stork that went floating skywards from his fishing-ground. There were butterflies indeed, fluttering over the launch's deck, though bats or moths might have seemed more appropriate to that twilight. Now and again we met one of the Malay boats, the rowers crooning a melancholy song, as they bent mechanically to the oars. And once there came a scream out of the depths of the forest, that jarred my overstrung nerves, so that I almost felt inclined to re-echo it ; so you may imagine how far gone I must have been in my romance. They said it was some hapless fruit-eating animal being crunched in the jaws of some beast of prey. Anyhow, I felt as if the darkness had entered into my soul ; as if I had been sentenced to imprisonment in a tropical dungeon. Nor could I help clutching my father's hand, though even then I was ashamed of myself, when he soothed my terrors instead of laughing at them.

" 'Wait and be patient, Grace,' was all he said ; and if I tried to follow the advice, I was soon rewarded.

"You cannot imagine what a delightful home is ours. The architecture would astonish you in England, but it is admirably adapted to the climate. Conjure up your fancies of a big bungalow in the most graceful harmonies of subdued colouring, with everything, both within and without, that is most coquettish. It is the glorification of the useful and ornamental bamboo, which, as schoolbooks would say, is pretty much to the Malay what the camel is to the Arab, or the reindeer to the Laplander. The walls are of double bamboo stems, interlaced and interwoven by bamboo cordage. The partitions and the hangings of the

rooms are of bamboo matting. Mats of the softest bamboo fibre cover the bamboo floors. And the open roof above the bamboo rafters is of shingles cut from the bamboo stems. Finally, my father smokes a pipe of bamboo; the water-pitcher in the pantry, and—for aught I know—the pots and pans in the kitchen, are made of plugged joints of the bamboo; and the beds and chairs in the broad verandahs, where we sleep and shelter through the day from the sunshine, are of that everlasting bamboo, like all the rest.

“As for the Malays, I like, nay, I love them. Every man is a gentleman, as every woman is a lady.

“I forgot to mention, by the way, that there are a few thorns among the roses. When I light the lamps, and draw the mats aside before the windows of a night, to look out on the glorious heavens, that are studded with constellations as thickly as any duchess's stomacher with the family diamonds at a drawing-room, I am smothered in a plague of most magnificent moths, that extinguish the lights in a general incrimination. I shook a scorpion the other morning out of my slipper: happily I was drowsy, and the slipper slipped though my fingers, otherwise the scorpion must certainly have stung me. He was caught and crushed, which is more than I can say for a huge hairy spider, standing about half a hand high at the shoulder, and casting a ghastly shadow of a foot or so behind him. While I stood still and screamed, he made off to his hole, and ever since I have been expecting his reappearance. Then there is a snake in the thatch just above my pillow: I can hear him rustling there in the watches of the night. He is supposed to be venomous; but the servants say there is

no danger, so long as there are plenty of rats and mice. And rats and mice run about in such abundance, that even papa is not uneasy; and thinks it better the snake should not be disturbed, on account of the sentiment or religious principles of the natives—I am not quite sure which. Nevertheless it is a delightful country; and if you only saw the flowers in our garden—flowers growing wild, for there are few under the shade of the forests—you would be content to put up with the snakes, and even compound for the spiders.”

In fact, Miss Moray saw most things through rose-coloured glasses in the meantime, and so far her letters were doubly welcome to her friends at home.

Those from Moray were likewise satisfactory on the whole, though written rather in pen and ink than in rosetints. He knew the tropics so well, that they had no longer power to interest him; and he judged the situation in Sumatra like a man of business. So far as he saw, the settlement was nearly as rich in resources as it had been represented, but much remained to be done before the Company could reckon upon dividends as on the Three per cents. He did every justice to the energy and abilities of his predecessor; but since the death of Colonel Chamberlain, Sanga had been unsettled and retrograding. The Dutch had been making overtures to the Sultan of Sarambang: so far as he could learn, the Sultan stood firm; but intrigues had been fomented at the Court, and it was rumoured that emissaries of the disaffected had been already stirring up sedition in the settlement. He apprehended no serious consequences, as the Dutch, having no shadow of a legal claim, were not likely openly to show their game; and agitators

who fell into his hands would be summarily dealt with. In the meantime, the Company might count on his being upon his guard, and he hoped to send them more reassuring intelligence very speedily.

It need hardly be said that those despatches, worded as they were, made Leslie more eager than ever to join his uncle. There was madness in the thought of Grace in those Malay jungles, exposed to the chance of intrigue and savage warfare, and leaning in her isolation on the single life of a man whose duties must necessarily expose him to danger. Yet leaving England was out of the question, so long as his mother hung between life and death. Mrs Leslie had been making encouraging progress, it was true; but any cause of anxiety might have the most serious consequences.

That knot was cut when he least expected it. He had left his mother fairly strong and in unusually good spirits, for one of his flying trips to the south. Two days afterwards a letter reached him, to say that all was over. The event had been so sudden, from an affection of the heart, that on this occasion there was no need to shock him by telegraphing. Ralph had hurried home to superintend the arrangements for the funeral; and morbidly self-reproachful for his undutiful impatience to be away, he had been smarting under a double sense of suffering. He

had seen his mother laid in her grave; he had sent away his friends; he had dined *tête-à-tête* with the relative who had nursed Mrs Leslie through her illness; and then had withdrawn to the solitude of his own room to pass a melancholy evening. A pile of unopened papers lay upon a table: he opened the one that first came to hand, in sheer distraction of spirits. It chanced to be a London evening journal, and he ran his eye unconcernedly down the middle pages. His eye was caught by a telegram, headed "Penang," and dated a couple of days before. It was brief enough and bitter enough:—

"There are rumours, which, however, want confirmation, of an attack by the independent and piratical tribes on the settlement of the Sumatra Company at Sanga. It is said that the managing director has been killed, and the settlement carried by storm. As the Company's steamer has been sent hither for repairs, we may have no certain intelligence for some weeks. Meantime, we may repeat that the intelligence must be received with caution."

There was nothing that Ralph had studied more regularly of late than the time-tables of the P. & O. Steam Navigation Company. He never knew when a piece of knowledge might be of use. "Thank God!" he ejaculated, "if I start to-morrow morning, I can catch the next packet for the Straits from Brindisi."

SELKIRK AFTER FLODDEN.

(A Widow's Dirge, October 1513.)

It's but a month the morn
Sin' a' was peace and plenty ;
Oor hairst was halfins shorn,
Eident men, and lassies denty.
But noo it's a' distress—
Never mair a merry meetin' ;
For half the bairns are faitherless,
And a' the women greetin'.
O Flodden Field !

Miles and miles round Selkirk toun,
Where forest flow'rs are fairest,
Ilka lassie's stricken down,
Wi' the fate that fa's the sairest.
A' the lads they used to meet
By Ettrick braes or Yarrow,
Lyin' thrammelt head and feet
In Brankstone's deadly barrow !
O Flodden Field !

Frae every cleuch and clan,
The best o' the braid Border,
Rose like a single man
To meet the royal order.
Oor Burgh toun itsel'
Sent its seventy down the glen ;
Ask Fletcher¹ how they fell,
Bravely fechtin', ane to ten !
O Flodden Field !

Round about their gallant king,
For countrie and for croon,
Stude the dauntless Border ring,
Till the last was hackit down.
I blame na what has been—
They maun fa' that canna flee—
But oh, to see what I hae seen,
To see what now I see !
O Flodden Field !

¹ The name of the man who brought an English flag back to Selkirk from Flodden. Four brothers of that name are said to have perished in the battle.

The souters a' fu' croose,
 O'er their leather and their lingle,
 Wi' their shoon in ilka hoose,
 Sat contentit round the ingle.
 Noo there's naething left but dool,
 Never mair their wark will cheer them;
 In Flodden's bluidy pool
 They'll naether walt nor wear them!
 O Flodden Field!

Whar the weavers used to meet,
 In ilka bielly corner,
 Noo there's nane in a' the street,
 Savin' here and there a mourner,
 Walkin' lanely as a wraith,
 Or if she meet anither,
 Just a word below their braith,
 O' some slaughtered son or brither!
 O Flodden Field!

There stands the gudeman's loom
 That used to gang sae cheerie,
 Untentit noo, and toom,
 Makin' a' the hoose sae eerie,
 Till the sicht I canna dree;
 For the shuttles lyin' dumb
 Speak the loudlier to me
 O' him that wunna come.
 O Flodden Field!

Sae at nicht I cover't o'er
 Just to haud it frae my e'en,
 But I haena yet the pow'r
 To forget what it has been;
 And I listen through the hoose
 For the chappin' o' the lay,
 Till the scrapin' o' a moose
 Taks my verra braith away.
 O Flodden Field!

Then I turn to sister Jean,
 And my airms aboot her twine,
 And I kiss her sleepless een,
 For her hairt's as sair as mine,—

A hairt ance fu' o' fun,
And hands that ne'er were idle,
Wi' a' her cleedin' spun
Against her Jamie's bridal.
O Flodden Field!

Noo we've naether hands nor hairt—
In oor grief the wark's forgotten,
Tho' it's wantit every airt,
And the craps are lyin' rotten.
War's awesome blast's gane by
And left a land forlorn;
In daith's dool hairst they lie,
The shearers an' the shorn.
O Flodden Field!

Wi' winter creepin' near us
When the nichts are drear an' lang,
Nane to help us, nane to hear us,
On the weary gate we gang!
Lord o' the quick an' deed,
Sin' oor ain we canna see,
In mercy mak gude speed
And bring us whar they be,
Far, far, frae Flodden Field!

J. B. SELKIRK.

THE WHIRLIGIG OF TIME.

"Thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges."

THE village of Loston is one of the prettiest places in Midhamshire. Situated in the valley of the Bent, at the foot of a range of low hills, and snugly surrounded on the one side by scattered copses, and the other by the trees of Squire Spencer's park, it seems to dwell like Laish of old, "quiet and secure." If it were not for the square tower of the church, which overtops the trees, and the occasional wreaths of blue smoke which mount upwards, the passer-by along the highroad at the head of the village might imagine that the district was still as unpeopled as when the Coriceni roamed gipsy-like through its glades. Not many people turn off the highroad to it except those who have business or other relations with the inhabitants; for the street which traverses it leads only to the river's bank, from whence foot-passengers on their way to the busy manufacturing towns on the northern shore are ferried across the stream by a boatman almost as old as Charon.

But to lovers of the picturesque the village is well worth a visit. At its head stands the church, whose perpendicular windows tell plainly that though its stone walls are smoothly dressed and faced, it has weathered the storms of centuries. At its side, beyond the limits of "God's acre," is the rectory, snugly surrounded by a well-built brick wall, over which the gable roof and tall red-brick chimneys of the house testify to its capacious comfort. From this point to the river's bank the street is skirted on either side by

small villas, shops, and cottages, which of themselves might be held as sufficient evidence that Mr Spencer fulfils all the requirements of a "good landlord." The only buildings which are not quite in harmony with the rest are those connected with a farm homestead in the middle of the village, which stand out in such marked contrast with their surroundings, that it needs no great wit to discover that they own another lord. This farm of fifty acres is the one blot and eyesore on the Loston property; and equally distasteful to Mr Spencer is the owner and cultivator—one Damper—a bumptious, self-satisfied, and politically short-sighted person, who differs as widely from his neighbouring landlord as his tenements do from the trim-looking cottages which face and surround them. No two men could be more unlike. It is only necessary to say that Mr Spencer is a quiet and peace-loving Churchman and Conservative, to be quite sure that Damper is a contentious sceptic and Radical. Between such different natures there could be no more assimilation than between oil and water; and the natural antagonism on Damper's part has been intensified by a suspicion that Mr Spencer looks upon his farm as a Naboth's vineyard, which might be advantageously incorporated into the surrounding property. But as Mr Spencer has always instinctively avoided arousing the wrath of his neighbour, the slumbering fire of Damper's ill-will has remained undisturbed, and until quite lately peace and contentment have reigned undisturbed in the village.

The 2000 acres which form the Loston estate are broken up into seven farms, which range in extent from 400 to 100 acres; and as good tenants gravitate towards good landlords as surely as sparks fly upwards, the farms are held by substantial, independent, industrious men, who are not above working with their labourers in the fields, and whose wives and daughters take undivided control of the dairies and poultry-yards. Between these men and their landlord a close sympathy has always existed; and on the occasion of a single bad season they have no more begged for an abatement of their rents than has Mr Spencer hesitated in a succession of bad years to return a fair proportion of the amounts due from them. During the last few years of agricultural depression, a reduction of 25 per cent has made farming possible to them, though seriously narrowing the income of their landlord. These happy relations have been reflected in the goodwill which has been reciprocal between the farmers and their labourers. Sixteen shillings a-week have been for years the wages paid to able-bodied workers; and as the cottages on the estate are rented at a shilling and eighteenpence a-week, while a garden allotment is given to every one who desires it, the lines of the labourers may be said to have fallen to them in pleasant places. They have this advantage also over both landlords and farmers, that however bad the season may be, and however low wheat may fall in the market, their wages never vary.

It might be supposed, therefore, that whatever cause the landlords and tenants might have had for complaint, the labourers would at least have been satisfied; and so

they were until the approach of the general election set in motion a number of political agitators, who first kindled the discontent of the people by wild assertions that the land of the country had been stolen from them by the landlords, and then sought to secure their votes by promising them a system of peasant proprietorships as a remedy for the imaginary wrong inflicted on them. Such promises entail an inevitable political Nemesis, as surely as a drunken debauch produces headache and nausea the next morning; and so when at a later period the Liberals returned to office, they found themselves called upon to honour the bills which they had imprudently, and, in some cases, dishonestly accepted when seeking for power. Possibly some of the more transcendental of the philosophical Radicals still retained faith in the nostrums which they had flaunted before the country electors; but most of them looked upon them in their true light as the stalking-horses under cover of which they had bagged the voters, and that feat having been accomplished, they would have gladly kicked them aside. But this was not to be. From all quarters came demands for the fulfilment of their promises; and for very shame's sake they were obliged to set on foot a series of measures, in the forefront of which were an extension of local government and a system of small peasant holdings. Among the provincial agitators these particular measures were hailed with acclamation, and instant steps were taken for giving effect to them by the formation of committees all over the country. In common with most villages in Midhamshire, Loston was visited by a succession of professional Radicals, who, in swelling words and with pot-house

eloquence, stirred the sluggish blood of the Lostonians to fever-heat.

A small committee, formed of the most energetic dupes of the Radical missionaries, took upon themselves to invite the member for the division to address them on the nature of their new privileges, and to assist at the formation of a village Board, such as was contemplated by the new legislation. This member was a Mr Simpkins, who owed his election to the fact that he was the proprietor of a large manufactory in a neighbouring town, and to the failure at the last moment of the candidate originally chosen by the caucus. Of statesmanship his public utterances showed not the slightest glimmering, while they abundantly testified to the extremely limited extent of his general knowledge. But he had the gift of that driftless speech which tickles the ears of the groundlings, and his personal assurance was without bounds. Considering himself still on his promotion, he lost no opportunities of advertising himself by speaking as often as possible; and he therefore readily accepted the invitation of the self-constituted Loston committee.

On the evening appointed, the little world of Loston was much agitated, and in several ways. The labourers were keenly excited at the near approach of the expected fulfilment of their hopes. The wealth, ease, and independence which had been promised them by their smooth-tongued prophets seemed to be at last within their reach, and they crowded to the place of meeting, prepared to accept the words of the "Parliament man" as inspired by ineffable wisdom. To the farmers, with the exception of Damper, who gloried in the reforms as being distasteful to his betters, the prospect of the imme-

diate future seemed full of uncertainty. This opinion was shared by Mr Spencer and the rector, Mr Penrhyn—who, however, taking a still wider and deeper view of the social and political consequences of the proposed schemes, looked with distrust on the ultimate results, and with pity on the duped peasants, whose eyes were so blinded by the gaudy tinsel held up to their sight that they were unable to see the dangers and pitfalls which lay in their path. But though powerless to avert the evil, they hoped, by taking part in the arrangements to follow, so to guide matters as to be able to reduce the extent of the mischief which they foresaw looming in the distance.

It was this consideration which induced Mr Spencer to take the chair on the occasion of the meeting. Long before the hour appointed for the opening of the proceedings, every available nook and corner in the schoolroom was crowded to excess. With few exceptions, the entire adult population of Loston had assembled to hear the new gospel propounded to them; while conspicuous in the corner near the platform stood an unwholesome-looking, gaudily dressed young man, whom some in the room had reason to recognise as Mr Spring, the managing clerk of the local Radical agents, Messrs Close & Jackson—a firm of Midham attorneys, whose reputation for sharp practice totally eclipsed that for all the virtues. The entrance of Mr Spencer and Mr Simpkins was the signal for uproarious applause, which was encouraged and instigated by Mr Spring and his confederates. So soon as order was restored, the chairman introduced the speaker of the evening to the assembly, and the rising of that gentleman was the signal for another outburst of cheering. After

some general remarks on the direction of recent legislation, Mr Simpkins approached the subjects more immediately in the minds of his hearers, and in the course of his speech said :—

“And now, ladies and gentlemen, I come to the points which most nearly concern us this evening. (Loud cheers.) I feel sure I shall not offend my friend the respected chairman, nor indeed any one in this room, when I say that the past condition of the labourers in this country has been a standing disgrace to the Legislature and the people of this land. (Loud cheers.) Well has the poet said—

‘Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a
prey,
When wealth accumulates, and men
decay.
Princes and lords may flourish, or may
fade,
A breath can make them as a breath
has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country’s
pride,
When once destroyed, can never be
supplied.’

(Cheers.) Fortunately the consumption spoken of by the poet has not been reached; but who can go through the village lanes of any part of the country without being struck with the contrast prevailing between the marble halls and gilded saloons of the county magnates and the squalid and unhealthy homes of those horny-handed sons of toil, whose industry and labour have produced the wealth which is everywhere flaunted in their faces? (Cheers.) I am well aware that in this village mitigating influences have, to some extent, relieved the labouring classes from many of the evils under which their less fortunate brethren are bowed down to the earth. But even here it cannot be said that the curse originally pronounced on la-

bour has been in any sense removed. It is true that men must work; but what I say is, let every man see the fruit of his own labour. (Loud cheers, led off by Mr Spring.) Don’t let the fruit all go to the pockets of the curled darlings of fortune, and the labourers be left with nothing but the cast-off husks and stones. (Cheers.) What wages are you getting? (A voice, ‘Sixteen shillings.’) Sixteenshillings-a-week! and is that enough for a man to support a wife and family upon? Can a man maintain his self-respect and live like a Christian on a miserable pittance such as that? (Cheers.) I say it is impossible; and that such a state of things has been allowed to exist, is due only to the fact that the labourers have hitherto been excluded from all share in making those laws which have created it. But that is now a thing of the past. You have been admitted to the franchise by the untiring exertions of that greatest of modern statesmen, the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone. (Loud cheers.) I am glad you cheer that name. It is in the hearts of such men as you that his name, and fame, and power, have their roots. (Cheers.) What care I whether the London newspapers and West-End Clubs sneer at his statesmanship and question his patriotism? What care I though the Universities turn their backs upon him? It will remain an everlasting disgrace to Oxford that she was some years ago base enough to throw him over. (Loud hisses.) It is to men like yourselves that he looks for his support. Learning and culture may be very good things, but what have they got to do with patriotism and statesmanship? (Shouts of ‘Nothing.’) No, no; give me men such as you are who know what they want, and know

how to get it too. (Cheers.) What you want at the present time are peasant holdings—(cheers)—and now let us see how you can get them. Well, first of all, you must form a local committee, consisting of not fewer than five members, who will have the entire control of all village concerns. I heartily congratulate you on this measure of reform. It is a great and glorious step in advance, and carries us back to the good old days when the Saxons ruled over "Merry England," before the debased Normans with their feudal ideas and oppressive laws crossed the silver streak of sea which separates us from France. Then, as now at last, every village held its own charter, and as a natural result

"Goods were fairly portioned,
And lands were fairly sold,
And the Saxons were like brothers
In the brave days of old."

(Loud cheers.) Well, then, among other functions which the committee will be called upon to perform will be the duty of securing at a fair value—(hear, hear)—so much land as is likely to be taken up by the labourers. The holdings thus acquired may either be purchased or rented; and if you will take my advice you will begin, at all events, at the first start by renting. (Hear, hear.) And then the whole world will be before you. You will have planted your feet upon the ladder, and it will depend upon yourselves how high you are to rise. (Loud cheers.) When once you are able to call land your own, you will bid adieu to the odious conditions of dependence and servitude. (Cheers.) Mr Trevelyan, I have no doubt, rightly described your sentiments when he said lately at Norwich that the labourers 'are tired of seeing idleness ruling industry, and pretension usurping the

political birthright of honest work. They are tired of being petted when they are good and snubbed when they are independent, according to the ideas of virtue and independence which are held in Tory parsonages and Tory manor-houses.' (Loud cheers.) In quoting this, I do not mean for a moment to reflect on our excellent chairman or your worthy rector. Indeed I should wish entirely to exclude this village from the scope of my remarks this evening. But we need think no more upon the past; that is now swept away, and before you lies a glorious future. (Cheers.) And now, in conclusion, I would say, 'Go on and prosper,' and may manly independence, true Liberal principles, and peace and plenty be the heritages that you will hand down to your children's children." So saying, the honourable member resumed his seat, amid loud and prolonged cheering.

So soon as quiet was restored the chairman rose and said: "I shall not stand between you and the business of the evening more than a few minutes; but I wish to make clear to you my position in this matter, and the more so because since the harangue we have just listened to gained your applause, I suppose it gained your concurrence. As many of you are aware, I have consistently looked upon the scheme of enforced peasant holdings as now presented to us with distrust, as being subversive of the order of things so long and happily existing in this land, and as being fraught with grave dangers to the labourers themselves. The experience of the last eight or ten years has been that in bad seasons farming in England does not pay. And if, with all the advantages in the shape of experience and money which the farmers possess, they have of late been unable

to work the land to a profit, how can you expect to succeed? I confess, and I am sure Mr Simpkins will forgive my saying so, that nothing I have heard to-night has in any way diminished my fears for the future. If we are to take the description given by the speaker of the condition of the labouring classes as the gauge of his knowledge of country life, I fear he knows very little indeed. I have lived in this village all my life, and of no part of my surroundings have I, until lately, been so proud as of the labourers on this estate. I have always found them to be straightforward, independent, honest, and industrious. (Cheers.) Mr Simpkins seems to think that you have hitherto been leading servile and downtrodden lives, and quotes Goldsmith to express his fear that England's 'bold peasantry' were in danger of being destroyed until he and his friends came to their rescue by saving their independence. But I am afraid that the measures he proposes will do more in a year to destroy the 'bold peasantry' than the system under which, until now, they have lived well and happily, has succeeded in doing in eight centuries. By an independent man I understand one who relies on himself; and the only means that Mr Simpkins has to suggest to you by which you are to arrive at independence is by going on the rates! (No, no.) I gather from those exclamations that this is a view of the question which has not as yet suggested itself to you; and I noticed that Mr Simpkins omitted all mention of it. But how is the land which you are to farm to be paid for? And how are the necessary buildings to be put up? Is the money to drop from the sky? No; it will have to come out of the rates. So the first step you are to take

towards independence is to become dependent on the rates. Then Mr Simpkins waxed eloquent on the idea of the local government reform bringing us once again to the condition of things under the Saxon heptarchy. But I think that if he really knew how wretchedly the people fared under the Saxon kings, he would not have ventured on such a bold paradox. The slightest acquaintance with the subject would have been sufficient to show him that labourers in his ideal age were nothing more than serfs; witness "Gurth, the born thrall of Cedric," in 'Ivanhoe.' But why should I go on? I know that the formation of local government boards and the purchase of peasant holdings are practically accomplished facts, and that nothing I can say will turn you from your present purpose. (Hear, hear.) From what I have said you will have perceived that I do not believe in the possible success of the scheme. But the Legislature has decreed it—(cheers)—and you have been taught to desire it, and therefore I am willing to see it have a fair and impartial trial. In conclusion, I can assure you, with all my heart, that the experiment, for I look upon it as nothing more, shall, so far as in me lies, have true and loyal support. (Some cheers.) And now to business. The Act says that we are to elect five representatives to serve on the local Board of this district; and now is the time for any one of you to propose, and another to second, any parishioner whom you may desire to see elected." (Cheers.)

The conclusion of the chairman's speech was followed by a buzz of conversation, and a grouping together of small knots among the audience for mutual consultation. At last John Ward, the most sub-

stantial farmer in the parish, a tall, square-shouldered, shrewd-looking man, rose, and without undue expenditure of words, proposed Mr Spencer as a fit and proper person to be elected. A seconder was found, and the motion was carried, though not by any means unanimously. The ice having been thus broken, the business went rapidly on, and ended by the further election of the Rector, John Ward, Peter Turf, and Henry Pimpernell. These two last were young labourers who had taken an active part in the recent agitation. Being home-bred young men, they had only homely wits; and being supremely ignorant of everything beyond the scope of their daily work, they had fallen ready dupes to the blandishments of the professional agitators.

Accompanied by Mr Spring, these two new members of the Board, at the conclusion of the meeting, crossed over the village street to the "Chough and Crow," to discuss the late proceedings over pipes and beer.

"Well, Mr Spring," said Turf, between puffs at his pipe, "we couldn't do no better than we have done this time, though I suspect Mr Damper will be real mad at being left out of the voting. But the chaps wouldna have voted agin the Squire nor yet agin the parson, and so we must go along as best we can."

"No; I don't think we could have won any more seats, though I should have liked to have seen Damper elected; but how your men could listen patiently to that dull old mutton-headed squire, after having heard a born orator like Mr Simpkins, I don't know. I never heard such an old croaker. Why, did not Mr Simpkins tell you that once possessed of land and your fortunes were made? and do you

think that a member of Parliament who knows Mr Gladstone—for I heard him say he did—would come down here and tell you that if it was not true? No, no; don't listen to Spencer, who would like to keep your noses on the grinding-stone all the rest of your lives; but go on and prosper, as Mr Simpkins told you you certainly would. Now I must be going to catch my train back to Midham presently, so let us get to business. Have you got that list I asked you to have ready, Henry Pimpernell?"

"Yes," said Henry. "Here is a tally of ten young chaps who wants to have ten acres apiece. But the mischief of it is, Mr Spring, that we han't got money enough to stock the farms. By hook or by crook we can each scrape together a twenty-pun' note. But that won't pay the piper by a precious long sight. An' if we can't show them how it is to be done, they will be a chucking up the business."

"Did not I tell you," said Mr Spring, "that I should come this evening prepared to make you an offer? And when John Spring says he will do a thing, you may be quite sure he will."

"Ay, ay, we knows you, Mr Spring," said Peter.

"Well, then," said Spring, "I must tell you that I talked it all over with our partners. I never saw such benevolent fellows as Close and Jackson in my life. As long as they can do people a good turn, they don't care one brass farthing about their own pockets. And directly I told them about you men here, 'We will help them,' said Close; 'That we will,' said Jackson. And I don't mind telling you that I was a bit afraid they were going to put down the money as a gift. They did not do that, however, but they did some-

thing very like it. 'Spring,' says they, 'go and tell the fine fellows at Loston that we will advance them the money to start fortune-making.'

"They be right noble gentlemen," said Henry. "I would lay a wager the Squire wouldna do as much for us, though he has known us from boys."

"Not he," said Spring; "but now listen to me. You ten have each got twenty pounds, you say. Well, my idea is, that if you club together you might stock your holdings for eighty pounds each. This would buy you three pairs of horses, some cows, three ploughs, and so on. My partners are willing to advance you each that sum, and you will then have your twenty pounds each to go on with until your farmyards and dairies are full. How does that suit you?"

"That sounds first-rate," said Peter Turf; "but what are you going to let us have the money at?"

"Well, as our partners want to do you a good turn, they won't ask you more than seven per cent, and that is less by three per cent than you would get the money anywhere else at."

"Done with you, Mr Spring, and I will go bail that the chaps here will be glad enough to get the money at your terms."

"Very well," said Mr Spring, knocking the ashes out of his pipe; "and now I must be off to catch my train. I shall be dropping over here every now and then just to see how things go on."

As Mr Spring went out of the bar, he met Mr Damper hurriedly entering. "Here is a pretty kettle of fish," said that gentleman, angrily; "why was not I, who have done so much for the cause, elected on the Board?"

"Could not manage it, Mr

Damper," said Spring. "You see these countrymen don't know their power yet, and you could no more have made them vote against the Squire and parson than you can get a dog to worry his master. Just you wait until next year, and then we shall bring you in at the head of the poll."

"Well, I tell you what it is," said Damper, not much mollified by Mr Spring's promise of future greatness; "if things don't go on the square, I will bring the whole box and dice about their ears."

"Oh, depend upon it, a man of your influence, either on or off the Board, will be pretty well able to drive the coach. But I must run off or I shall miss my train."

But notwithstanding Mr Spring's assurances, it was not long before Mr Damper found that things were not going, in his sense, on the square. The surveyor employed by the Board, being guided only by his instructions to select the hundred acres best suited for the holdings, marked off fifteen acres of Damper's land, the remaining eighty-five acres coming from Mr Spencer's farms. Even in his most suspicious moods, Damper had never suspected that, with Mr Spencer's two thousand acres to choose from, the surveyor would have been so unjust as to touch his little property; and when he learned that a nice strip of mixed arable and grass nearest the homestead had actually been staked off, he considered that he did well to be angry. He was met with the news as he came in from market; and without waiting to go into the house, he galloped to the Hall, determined to have it out with the Squire, to whose malignity he most unreasonably put down the mischief. Fortunately Mr Spencer was not at home, and so a meeting was avoided; but at the

next Board Mr Damper demanded to be heard. The scene was not a pleasant one. Damper stormed and raved with all the indignation of an awakened dupe; and at last became so personally abusive to the Squire and Rector, who had had no more to do with the choice of his land than any two inhabitants of Jupiter or Saturn, that the chairman was obliged to refuse him further hearing. This outbreak was but a prelude to a number of angry altercations on the occasion of his meeting either the Squire, Rector, or Farmer Ward, all of whom he believed to be leagued together against him.

But the result remained quite unaffected by his wrath, which, however, gathered fresh strength when he received a notice from the Board informing him that the price which he was to receive for his land was at the rate of £45 per acre purchase-money, with £5 per acre added as compensation for disturbance. Against this iniquitous assessment, as he termed it, he appealed to the County Court Judge of the district, who, after inquiry, declined to interfere, and left the appellant saddled with the costs of the appeal. From this time onward the political atmosphere at Loston became highly electrical. In obedience to instructions from the Local Government Board, the gradual repayment of the sum of £5500 advanced from the Consolidated Fund for the purchase of the 100 acres, *plus* £10 per acre for compensation and buildings, had to be provided for out of the rates. Already complaints had been heard of the high local taxes. Even the most ardent supporters of the School Board in theory grumbled when it became necessary to support their theory at a cost of a shilling in the pound, and, with the addition of an extra

eighteenpence to provide holdings for ten labourers, they felt that their cup was full. Mr Damper was now no longer solitary in his discontent. The farmers, tradesmen, mechanics, and ratepayers, generally cried aloud against the extra burden laid upon them. The "Chough and Crow," which used to be the haunt of genial mirth, became a centre for angry murmurings and fierce disputations. For though the anger was universal, the objects of the wrath were not always the same. The shopkeepers protested against being burdened with a rate which, in their opinion, should unquestionably be borne by the land. Here they met Damper face to face. Such a proposition was, in his opinion, nothing short of rank robbery, and so he was never tired of telling them, in no measured terms. But in addition to the rate, and in spite of the £5 per acre paid them in compensation, the farmers complained that the land taken was some of the most profitable ground they had, and that the possession of it had enabled them to work the heavy hill-land at the back. Without it they protested that they could not make the farms pay, and threatened to give notice.

Meanwhile Turf, Pimpernell, and their eight companions entered on their promised lands. Messrs Close & Jackson were as good as their word, and advanced the £80 per holding, taking care to get ample security for the money, in the shape of bills of sale on everything possessed by their debtors, including furniture, implements, live stock, and crops in the ground. At first matters went as was expected. The peasant holders, delighted with the feeling that they were no longer at the beck and call of their masters,

worked vigorously and well; and their wives, mostly young women, to whom the idea of their husbands being no longer common labourers brought feelings of gratified pride, lent ready help in the dairies. Their jaunts into market in the jointly owned spring-cart formed an additional delight, and gave them opportunities of indulging in the bits of finery which are so dear to the hearts of young women of that class. With the balance of the money received from the sale of their eggs, butter, and garden-stuff, they were able to eke out the £20 in cash with which each household had started; and though the stores in the stockings began to get lower and lower, they and their husbands still looked forward with confidence to the wheat and potato harvests, from which times they fully expected to date their prosperity. The weather was all in their favour, the crops promised to be large and good; and as the grain grew ripe for the sickle, and the potatoes blossomed in the field, the people and gentle-folks for miles round came to look at and admire the new peasant holdings. Even the capricious English summer seemed to make an exception in their favour, and during harvesting scarcely a drop of rain fell to delay the work. As the last load of wheat was brought in from the holdings, the peasant farmers joined in a genuine harvest-home, reminding Mr Spring, who came over for the occasion, "of the golden days of Merry England." But unfortunately the reflection of the "golden days" was rather poetical than real; for when Turf and his friends carried their newly threshed wheat to market, they found the market glutted with the grain of other farmers, who like themselves could not afford to wait for

better prices. The consequence was, that instead of getting 40s. a quarter, as they had hoped, they were obliged to content themselves with 35s. This was a bitter disappointment, and reduced their profits on the grain from £7 to £6 per acre. It is true there was the straw, which added another £5; but the margin of profit which a holder of ten acres has to content himself with is so small, that the loss of £1 per acre was a serious misfortune. As it was, after they had paid the half-year's interest on the money borrowed from Messrs Close & Jackson, laid by a six-months' rent, and paid off their scores at the village shops, the balances left were not such as to make the prospect of the winter anything but a cause for anxiety. Meanwhile Mr Damper and the Squire's tenants had also been feeling the effects of low prices; and some of them, notably Mr Damper, chose to attribute the fall in prices to the eagerness with which the Loston and other peasant holders had rushed into the market after harvest. When business is bad, the sufferers are apt to account for it in illogical ways, and to harbour uncharitable feelings towards those whom they believe to have been instrumental in bringing it about. The farmers had never viewed the peasant holdings with favour; and now that they had a distinct grievance against them, they felt no compunction in giving expressions in acts to their ill-will. In self-defence, as he put it, Mr Damper began to sell milk to the villagers, and by so doing cut out Turf, Pimpernell, & Co., who had begun to get together a little milking business, but who were quite unable to compete with their formidable neighbour. On several occasions when there was no work

doing on their holdings, they had offered their services to the farmers, but were refused employment, as to the farmers also those were idle times. This depression in their affairs was reflected more or less in their tempers. The bright hopes with which the year had begun were clouded over, and in such circumstances a little ill temper and occasional recriminations are what should naturally be expected. Pretty Harriet Pimpernell was no longer allowed to go to market. She spent too much money, Henry said. Other husbands followed suit; and the wives, deprived of their outings, revenged themselves after the manner of their kind by making their homes uncomfortable, and by nagging at their spouses.

As the autumn wore on, it became obvious that something must be done for the peasant farmers at Loston and elsewhere, if they were to be kept on their feet. On all sides things were going wrong. The price of stock fell lower than it had ever been before. A succession of wet produced outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, and the land was so saturated that the farmers were unable "to get on it." Such times of agricultural depression produce their spawn of professional agitators as surely as a falling barometer at sea heralds the approach of Mother Carey's chickens. Within a few weeks the whole country-side was inundated by paid Radicals, who exhorted the labourers to stand firm, and promised them further subsidies from the local exchequer if they would only do as they were told. With the shopkeepers and ratepayers generally they had a more difficult task than on the former occasion, and it was necessary to offer them a distinct bait in order to mitigate their resentment at the increased rates which they had

been called upon to pay during the past year. To a great extent the hollowness of the political peasant-holding scheme had been exposed. The year's experience had shown that it had not done any real good to Turf and his friends, while at the same time the high rates had materially interfered with the prosperity of the district. It was plain, therefore, to the agitators, that they must conciliate this class by relieving their burdens, and it was equally plain that the relief could only be obtained at the expense of the land. In the preceding session the cue had been given as to the way in which this might be done. It had then been suggested that all lands whose owners at the end of the last century had not accepted the offer then made them to compound the land-tax, should now be rated at the full amount of four shillings in the pound on the present rental.

This expedient was eagerly seized upon by the wire-pullers, who used it as a weapon to persuade the ratepayers that the landowners had for nearly a century evaded a large proportion of the tax due from them; that now was the time to enforce this to the full; and that if they, the ratepayers, would only support the Radical members at the approaching local elections, they would at once be relieved from the burden which had been put upon them.

This proposal seemed to Mr Damper the last straw which was to break his back. He protested and inveighed against it, and even went the length of calling on Mr Spencer to propose to him the adoption of a combined opposition to this latest villany, as he called it. But Mr Spencer pointed out to him that this was but the logical conclusion of the policy which he had himself previously support-

ed; and added, that though he should make a fight to be re-elected on the Board, he fully expected to be defeated. From Mr Spring, to whom he went to remind him of his promised support at the next local election, Mr Damper got even less comfort. In jaunty tones Mr Spring told him that circumstances altered cases. "You see," he went on, "you have not acted with us of late, and we can't have any turncoats in *our* ranks. You must either march with us or go about your business. As to the four-shilling tax, that has gone too far to be stopped. We have the mandate of the constituencies that it is to be enforced, and enforce it we must. But I am very busy this morning, Mr Damper, and if you have nothing more particular to say, I will wish you good morning."

"I have one thing to say," said Mr Damper, who had been nursing his wrath while Mr Spring was speaking, "and that is, that you are a liar and a scoundrel. It is men like you who are driving Liberals into the opposite camp; and rather than have anything more to do with you, I shall go straight across and put my name down in the Tory register; and I hope that every one else who has been cheated and lied to as I have been will do the same."

These remarks glanced lightly off Mr Spring, who was well armed with triple greaves of impudence, cunning, and assurance. Besides, since the time had become stormy, he had grown accustomed to verbal assaults from those whom he had betrayed and injured. Feeling ran high during these days, and Loston, like most other places, was rent by divisions and torn by conflicting interests. Agriculturally, things were going from bad to worse; and it was only by promising the peasant farmers that after the

next local election they would receive grants to defray the cost of horses to work the land, and manure to dress it, that they were induced to continue in their holdings. The wet and profitless autumn had been a very trying time for them. They had begun to feel the pinch of real poverty, when there is no one at hand to help, and no regular source of livelihood on which to depend. Idle and despondent, the men took to frequenting the "Chough and Crow"; and their wives, ill-fed and disappointed, grew slatternly and peevish.

The agitators moved heaven and earth to keep up the spirits of their partisans, and shortly before the election they again enlisted the services of Mr Simpkins to inspire confidence into the party. On this occasion Mr Spencer, for obvious reasons, did not take the chair, which was occupied by Mr White, the leading grocer, who, having been attracted by the promise of reduced rates, and the circulation of increased local funds in the district, had of late thrown himself heartily into Mr Spring's schemes.

Mr Simpkins's reception was not nearly as warm as it had been a year ago, and indeed there were not a few hisses audible above the organised applause of Mr Spring and his friends. This change of attitude made a visible impression on the speaker. He opened tamely, and with hesitation, and it was some time before he could regain his accustomed empty volubility. After discussing several questions connected with the local administration, he said: "And now, gentlemen, I come to the question of the peasant holdings. (Cheers and hisses.) There are some people who say they have proved a failure. (A voice, 'So they have.') But that is far from being the case. As we all know, the season has been

one of unexampled bad weather. (A voice, 'How about the harvest?') Not only our working friends here, but farmers all over the country, are at their wits' ends how to pay their way. My friends Mr Turf and Mr Pimpernell, and their companions, have struggled manfully against overwhelming odds of bad weather and low prices. That during the past year they have not been as successful as they had reason to hope, is in no sense their fault. No, gentlemen; though it is true that they have had to contend with adverse circumstances, I cannot help asking myself whether they should not as free Britons, with common rights to the land, have been better equipped, in the first instance, for their undertakings? (Cheers.) How comes it, I should like to know, that country gentlemen are rolling along the roads in their carriages, while our friends here are struggling with all their might and main to keep the wolf from the door? (Loud cheers.) What better right have the squires to the acres they own than any of you have? (Loud cheers.) I answer, in nine cases out of ten, None at all. For the most part the land has been snatched from the people to reward the favourites and sycophants of kings and queens. (Cheers.) But, gentlemen, I for one should be almost content to accept accomplished facts with regard to the land, if the landowners had been content with their original thefts, and had done their duty to the people whom they have robbed. (Cheers.) But have they? Again I say, in nine cases out of ten, No. (Loud cheers.) Will you believe it that, at least for a hundred years, the squires have cheated the community out of a tax of two or three shillings per acre! (Groans and hisses.) I don't wonder at your indignation.

When I think of this money kept back by fraud, and see all the misery and want which cover the land as with a flood, I ask myself, how long is this to last? (Loud cheers.) The election to the Local Board is approaching, and I am much mistaken in the men of Loston if they allow this iniquity to last a day longer than the election of the new Board. (Cheers.) The matter rests with you. And if you are in earnest, vote every one of you for candidates who are pledged to enforce the four-shilling land-tax. (Hear, hear.) First of all, I would urge you to do this as a matter of duty, and you will find that in this, as in every case, virtue brings its reward. For what will be the result? You will receive from the land in the parish an extra rate of nearly £400 a-year, and will relieve yourselves of that amount of burden. (Loud cheers.) And now, in conclusion, I would put in a word for those peasant farmers who have, during the past year, fought so bravely such an uphill fight. Something is due to them. (Hear, hear.) They are the vanguard of the large army of labourers who are destined before long to reoccupy the land stolen from our ancestors. (Cheers.) Show them that you appreciate their patriotic toil by giving them a share of the money you will recover from the squires. Remember that they willingly undertook the struggle without any help or support. Is it fair to let them continue to do so? (Cheers.) I say it is not. And I would strongly urge you to give them help which shall be equivalent to that which they would have had at the outset, if might had not overcome right." (Loud cheers.)

As Mr Simpkins resumed his seat, Mr Damper rose in the body of the room, and said: "Gentlemen, I rise to protest, with all the

power I am capable of, against both the facts and the policy enunciated in the speech we have just listened to. First, as to Mr Simpkins's facts. He told us that in nine cases out of ten the landlords had stolen their land from the people. I deny this, and I challenge him to make good his words. If you look round the whole of this country you won't find more than two landlords whose families have possessed the lands they hold for more than a century. Certainly, therefore, with the exception of these two instances, of which I know nothing, the land has in each case been bought in hard cash, just as any of us might buy a house or a horse. As most of you know, I myself bought the land I own in this parish, and I wish I had never seen the place. I gave £100 an acre for it, and last year, at the bidding of the Local Board, I was ordered to sell it,—and for how much? For £45 *an acre*; and so I was obliged to put up with a loss of £55 on every one of the fifteen acres I had to give up—a large sum for a poor man like me to lose. And all for what? That the electioneering agents might put ten labourers on to land, who know no more about the science of farming than a shipwright knows how to design a man-of-war. (A voice, 'You used to be all in favour of peasant holdings.') So I was: but then I always thought things would go naturally, not be forced like; and that when a smart young labourer had laid by enough money to take a holding, he would go to the landlord and ask for one; and I will lay my life there is not a landlord in England who would not gladly let him have one. But what have you done here? The whole thing is a political dodge to catch your votes. First of all comes a Radical lecturer, then a

Radical agent, and they say to the labourers, 'Now is *your* time, take the land that is offered you, and we will find the money to start you and keep you going.' Well, as you know, they got ten young fellows to take the holdings, and though the harvest was the finest we have had for years, these political farmers are already out at elbows. (No, no.) What do you want the extra money for, then? At all events the agent has been promising these dupes that if they get the right men elected on the Board they shall have money given them to pay for their horse-labour and manure. And how are they going to get this money? Mr Simpkins has told you. He says that landlords have during the present century been paying a tax of four shillings in the pound on the rentals of the last century, and tells you that this tax should be adjusted to present rents; and thus he holds out to you the prospect of getting £400 a-year from Mr Spencer's and my pockets. (Cheers.) Ah, you cheer this, just as I cheered the idea of peasant holdings a year or two ago; but the time will come when you will find you have been deceived as I have been. But even suppose that this were just, which it is not, is it wise at this time of depression to lay a further burden on the land? I am telling you the truth when I say that for some years now I have not made my farm pay, and I have been constantly obliged to draw upon my capital. If this additional tax is put on me, I shall have to shut up shop. And mind you, if rents continue to go down as they are doing, we shall be fast getting back to the rentals of last century, and then you will not benefit one halfpenny by this most unjust and unwise proposal."

But Mr Damper's remonstrances fell on deaf ears. The decree had gone forth that the landlords were to be taxed, and it was on this question that the election turned. To all who had watched the course of events, the result was a foregone conclusion. The rector refused to be put in nomination, but both Mr Spencer and John Ward manfully went to the poll. From the first, however, their chances were hopeless, and the contest ended in the victory over them of Mr White, the Radical grocer, and the village tailor, the rector's seat being taken by a labourer. Turf and Pimpernell were re-elected. Without loss of time the new Board proceeded to enforce the "mandate" of their constituents against the landlords. The imposition of this new burden increased the amount of the full tax to 20 per cent on the rent of the parish; and as for several years an annual refund had been made to the tenants of 25 per cent, Mr Spencer found his resources so crippled by it, that he deemed it absolutely necessary to shut up his house and go abroad until the evil was overpassed.

In other circumstances, this determination would have been a cause of deep regret and pain to Mr Spencer; but the relations between the inhabitants of the parish and himself had of late been so embittered by the action of the Radical agents, that it was almost with a feeling of relief that he turned his back on Loston. Before leaving, he wrote to John Ward, explaining his motives, in the following terms:—

"DEAR MR WARD,—The recent action of the Local Board, in imposing an additional burden on the land, has so materially reduced my available income that I have been obliged, in the interests of my

family, to adopt measures of retrenchment. After mature and anxious consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it will be necessary, for a time at least, to go abroad and to shut up the Hall. I need not tell you, who are acquainted with my feelings on the subject, how great has been my pain at the way both I and mine have been treated by a majority of the people among whom I have lived all my life. I can, without exaggeration, say that to their wants and griefs I have always lent a willing ear, and have done all that has lain in my power to alleviate them. That the people have now turned upon me and returned my efforts on their behalf with ill-will, is, I am well aware, due to the pernicious influences of the paid Radical agitators, who have used the people as a means to gain their own political ends, and who will not scruple to throw them over with the same ease with which they adopted their cause. As you are aware, I have always been in favour of granting peasant holdings to any labourer who may have sufficient knowledge, energy, and capital to undertake them; but I have also been consistently opposed to the idea of using them for political purposes, as has been the case here, and of counteracting the ignorance and inefficiency of the holders by grants out of the local funds. Under these last conditions, the experiment must, I am convinced, end in failure; and there are, I think, already signs that the attempt here will speedily break down.

"To you and all my other tenants I now, for a time, bid adieu. It will always be a pleasure to me to hear of your welfare, and it will remain my ardent wish to be able to come among you again.—I am, &c.,
ROBERT SPENCER."

The announcement of Mr Spencer's determination to shut up the Hall threw a wet blanket over the rejoicings of the majority at their success at the polls. The step was at once recognised as being likely to deal a blow at the prosperity of the place. Mr Spencer's custom had been bestowed almost entirely upon the shops in the village, and, as his household was a large and liberal one, it was obvious that the effect, on the traders would be very serious. But besides this, his arrangements entailed the dismissal of the head-gardener, and all the under-gardeners except two, as well as his coachman and grooms, whose duties were to terminate when they had taken the horses to Tattersall's for sale. In Mr Damper's case, though he was unable to adopt Mr Spencer's heroic measures, yet he took instant steps to reduce his expenditure to the lowest ebb.

As to the peasant holders, the subsidies granted them from the local funds gave them a temporary fillip; but the magic of the scheme was broken, the novelty of the position had disappeared; and though doubtless their means were improved by the new arrangements, they did not show the same energy for work that they had done the year before. Quarrels and disagreements sprang up among them as to the share of each in the grants awarded them; whilst, from a want of any real knowledge of farming, their crops did not yield nearly so well as during the first year they had taken the land over. In justice, however, to Turf & Co., it must be said that from all quarters came reports of the failures of the peasant-holding schemes. Everywhere the system had been made a move in the political game, an approach to a war between classes. All spontaneousness had been taken out of

it, and an attempt had been made to manufacture a class of men who, if they were to be more than ephemeral, were bound to obey the laws of natural growth.

This fact, which would not have been recognised by the agitators if failure had attended the attempt at Loston alone, was forced on their notice by the dismal reports which reached them from all sides. In these circumstances it was a necessity for them "to reconsider their position" with regard to the measure. Openly to retreat was impossible. A Radical is never wrong. Heaven and earth may pass away, but his word never fails; and so in this case, as in every other defeat of the Radical intention, some scapegoat had to be found. After due consideration it was decided that the lot should fall on the peasant holders themselves. With that marvellous disregard for consistency and lack of honesty which distinguish Radical prints and spokesmen, it now became the fashion to run down the peasant farmers as vain young men who had thrust themselves forward against the wishes and advice of the Radical agents, and who should now make way for others better qualified for the undertaking.

This line of conduct produced its natural results. The peasant farmers threw up their holdings all over the country. Among the last to yield were Turf and his friends, who struggled on until "hope withering fled," and left them with one only way of extricating themselves from absolute ruin. With the consent of Messrs Close & Jackson, they held a sale of their effects, the proceeds from which barely covered the capital and interest due to these enterprising attorneys, who alone of all concerned had reason to be satisfied

with the result of the peasants' venture. As to the men themselves, they congratulated each other on once more being able to get work at sixteen shillings a-week. Their holdings were again thrown into the farms, and something of the old relations were renewed between the farmers and their labourers. But the evil effects produced on the trade of the place by the constant agitation and the ceaseless uncertainty of the preceding years, coupled with the absence of the Squire, were not so easily cured. Empty houses and neglected tenements bore evidence to the severity of the monetary crisis through which the village had passed. The trimness, order, and content which had of old characterised it had passed away, and in their places neglect, confusion, and complainings were everywhere observable. But with the disappearance of the Radical agitators and their political *protégés* things began to mend; and just as it is men of strong constitution who are attacked by the occasional severe illnesses from which weakly people are exempt, so the very severity of the crisis at Loston and elsewhere bore testimony to the strength and durability of the stuff of which Englishmen are made. The poison which had been

injected into their veins had been noxious and virulent; but through much tribulation it had been purged away, and the people were now at last awakened from the fevered dreams which had haunted them.

The theories which to their late distorted imaginations had appeared just and reasonable were now recognised as wild and dishonest; and hence it arose, that when, at the approach of the next parliamentary election, Mr Simpkins came to Loston to invite the support of the inhabitants, he met with a reception so widely different from those he had formerly received, that he did not care to repeat his visit. Like most of those candidates for power who had knowingly deceived the people for the purpose of kindling an enthusiasm for spoliation, he was, by the decision of the voters, ignominiously relegated to the retirement of private life. In that happy retreat he and his friends will probably have abundant leisure to study the records of their race; and if they read the pages aright, they will learn from them that Englishmen have throughout their history been "arm'd so strong in honesty," that though sometimes scathed, they have never yielded to the weapons of falsehood and dishonour.

SOME FRENCH POETS.

"Prenez tost ce baisier, mon Cœur."

—CHARLES D'ORLÉANS.

THIS kiss,—take it quickly, my Heart!—
 My Mistress to you doth present
 Of her own sweet grace and consent:
 Fair, good, young, and guileless of art.

Trust me, I will watch, for my part,
 That Dangier be foiled of the scent.
 My Mistress to you doth present
 This kiss:—take it quickly, my Heart!

Dangier, with a sentinel's art,
 Each night on his post having spent,
 Has now gone asleep in his tent.
 Be wise: now fulfil your intent.
 This kiss,—take it quickly, my Heart!

A WINNOWER'S SONG TO THE WINDS.

"À vous, troupe légère."

—JOACHIM DU BELLAY.

To you, O airy band,
 Who flutter o'er the land
 On wings that flit away,
 And, with shrill minstrelsy,
 The leafy greenery
 So delicately sway,

These violets I bring,
 Lilies, wild-flowers of Spring,
 And, of a vermeil hue,
 These roses freshly blown,
 Their virgin blushes shown,
 And these pinks, all for you.

With your delicious breath
 Fan ye this plain beneath,
 Fan this my home-retreat;
 While I keep labouring,
 My corn-heaps winnowing
 All in the noon-tide heat.

PASTORALE.

"Entre les fleurs, entre les lis,"

—VAUQUELIN DE LA FRESNAYE.

All among the flowers and lilies,
Sweetly resting, slept my Phillis;
And, her countenance around,
 Little Cupids gaily strayed.
 They in airy pastimes played
Where heaven's image they had found.

As I worshipped all her beauty
With all loyal love and duty,
My soul whispered in mine ear:—
 "Fool! why linger? Time that's lost
 Oft is sold at heavy cost;
And, if found, is ransomed dear."

Then, in secret, bending lowly,
I tread noiselessly and slowly,
And her lips kissed coralline!
 Tasting such delight, I cry,—
 "In the Paradise on high
Such bliss have the souls divine!"

SONNET.

"O vent plaisant, qui d'haleine odorante,"

—VAUQUELIN DE LA FRESNAYE.

O pleasant Wind, whose breathings softly pant,
 Embalming all the air with scent of flowers;
O smiling Meadow, wherein tearful hours
Spent good Damætas, and fair Amarant!

O shading Wood, O Stream that swift dost roll,
 Who saw new bliss their once sad hours employ,
 Who saw their grief transmuted into joy,
When both were breathing but one blended soul!

Age bids them part from such felicity:
But, though with pious longing they may try
All former love to banish as a dream,

Still doth a sentiment, replete with grace,
Cause them to love, beholding this fair place,
This Wind, this Wood, this Meadow, and this Stream.

IDILLIE. — GALATEA.

"O Galatée (ainsi toujours la Grâce)."

—VAUQUELIN DE LA FRESNAYE.

O Galatea,—so may every Grace
 Preserve thy youthful loveliness of face!—
 Come, after supper, to our lowly thatch,
 Thy mother with thee, for this even-tide:
 Near a bright fire, where we shall not be spied,
 Thou, with thy mother, and with me, shalt watch.

Brighter than day to us will seem the night:
 Our shepherds, seated by the candle-light,
 Carding the wool, will brave old stories make,
 While Lizzie roasts the chestnuts by the fire:
 And, if of playful games thou dost not tire,
 Games will ensure our being kept awake.

IDILLIE. — FRANCETTE.

"Sitôt qu'on mettra les troupeaux."

—VAUQUELIN DE LA FRESNAYE.

Soon as our flocks from folds are led
 To yon hill-pastures to be fed,
 I'll go to-morrow, fair Francette!
 To sell a calf in market-town,
 And buy a piece of bombazette,
 To make your petticoat and gown.

Some handsome knives, too, will I bring;
 A belt, with scissors on its ring;
 A ball of thread, a purse of net;
 And all as gifts for you, my dear:
 But kiss me quickly, fair Francette!
 Two or three times while waiting here.

Come to receive, to-morrow night,
 When a dark mantle hides the light,
 My pretty presents, fair Francette!
 Within this copsewood; which behind,
 Your anxious mother watch may set,
 And seek us long,—yet never find!

IDILLIE.—LEUCOTHÉE.

"L'hiver ridé n'a point gâté."

—VAUQUELIN DE LA FRESNAYE.

The wrinkled Winter has no power
To fade Leucothea's summer flower ;
His furrows cannot dispossess
Her pristine charms of loveliness ;
But still, between their curving folds,
Love cunningly an ambush holds,
And all along those tiny lines
A hidden fire of beauty shines.—
So does the Sun, in splendour proud,
Unveil his face within a cloud ;
So Daphnis, in the boughs, with care
Deftly conceals his bird-limed snare.

J. P. M.

A SCOTCH PHYSICIAN.

THE motives which lead a man to autobiography are seldom such as, on the face of the matter, one would imagine probable. It is not the wronged who wish to make themselves straight with posterity, nor those who have some leading passion, some thwarted hope, or purpose misunderstood, who thus leave behind them a means of understanding and elucidation, which it has not been possible to secure in their lifetime. It is very seldom that the story of a man's life written by himself reverses the verdict already passed upon him, or makes the world regret a hasty judgment. The victims of injustice die and make no sign. They are either despairing, or they are indifferent, too deeply discouraged to attempt a last vindication, or else too scornful of the hasty judgment given against them to attempt it. But when a man whose ways have been all prosperous, and his efforts rewarded, finds himself at the end of life in a well-earned leisure, and looking back over the green pastures, or even over the hilly ascents by which he has come, feels in his soul that he can approve the ways of Providence, and acknowledge that all has been done well, there is something in the survey which disposes him to put it on record for the benefit of those who come after. It is a good feature in human nature that we are thus as a race more disposed to chronicle good than evil, and that the man who has no complaint to make against his con-

temporaries or against fate should be the one most apt to record his experiences. Thus the bitter chapters of existence, the struggles that have not been successful, the combats which have ended in defeat, drop, like the heroes of them, into a merciful oblivion; and the good man who asks nothing of posterity but to be gently guided by his example, who has no passionate protest or appeal to make, and leaves no ravelled web behind him to be disentangled, is the happy type of humanity with which we are made familiar by self-portraiture generally. If here and there an acrid note strikes in to these self-revelations, it is in the shape of some musing or reminiscence, with which a troubled soul has given itself utterance unawares, not thinking of an audience. Those who write their own lives appeal on the whole to the approval and admiration, not to the pity or tardy justice, of the world.

The life of Sir Robert Christison, of which the greater part is self-recorded, is an example of this cheerful kind of personal history. A physician, and especially a successful physician, seldom takes a melancholy view of human nature or of life. It might be supposed that the enormous depths of human suffering which must be revealed to an observer in such a position must sadden and overwhelm even the cheerfulest nature; but this does not seem practically to be a usual effect. No doubt the immense power of alleviation which

The Life of Sir Robert Christison, Bart., M.D., D.C.L. Oxon., LL.D. Edin., Professor of *Materia Medica* in the University of Edinburgh, Physician to the Queen for Scotland, &c. Edited by his Sons. In 2 vols. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London: 1885.

medical science gives, the happiness of bringing back life as sometimes happens from the very edge of the grave, counts for more in a long review than the sadder background of pain which cannot be relieved, just as in individual experience the often short-lived and distant moments of joy tell far more when we look back upon them than years of monotonous dulness, or even of trouble and sorrow. Then there is something in the practical conduct of life, in the fact of being up and doing, of maintaining a struggle always, and being kept in the active exercise of all the faculties, which tends, even in the midst of all the ills that flesh is heir to, towards a cheerful view. It is the moralist and philosopher who is sad. He who is in active conflict with evil, either bodily or spiritual, who is always on the strain to find some new device or expedient by which to overcome or hold in check the great enemy, is seldom overwhelmed by the depressing thought of a world full of suffering. His thoughts are so full of the new combinations necessary to meet every development of evil, he is kept so continually on the alert to find out new methods of opposing the new possibilities of suffering, that everything that is morbid is driven out of a mind which has no leisure for sentimental questionings. A good doctor is like a general in the face of an enemy: a want of watchfulness at one point of his operations may ruin all. He has to have eyes everywhere, and an unfailing attention. He has to be prompt and swift, seeing in a moment every new advance, divining even the advances as yet only conceived, the plans before they are laid. All this activity of the brain, this looking before and after, this keen tension

of thought and observation, counterbalance the impressions which a perpetual contact with suffering must make upon every man of feeling. Those of us who look on idly fall into despair. We arraign God before our petty human tribunals. We ask why this should be, with groans and shrieks of indignation which perhaps show our own esteem of ourselves more than our pity for others. We ask whether the life is worth living which involves so much pain. But it is very rarely that the physician has time for such inquiries. He is too busy circumventing disease, facing every new outbreak, shifting his position as the enemy shifts in its protean multiplicity of aspects. The active philanthropist, too, the man who is not simply a spectator but an energetic agent in the great battle with vice and spiritual evil,—that evil before which the idle moralist faints and can do nothing but moan,—is invariably a cheerful man. This seems the happy consequence of work, both in the physical and moral fields of labour. The leader of an army in active service has no time to be discouraged.

This is no doubt the reason why the medical profession, which more than any other is brought face to face with the miseries of humanity, should have so little share in the morbid speculations which are so common among us. Notwithstanding that almost inevitable blunting of the perceptions which arises from constant contact with great evils and the perpetual sight of suffering, there is no profession so humane, and none which has so much toleration for even the follies of real sufferers. When the ordinary spectator is disposed to be impatient, to conclude that complaint is exaggerated, or that the ordinary rules of self-control might

be exercised with advantage, the doctor in most cases shows a sympathy, an attention to the wail of the feeble, a toleration which is scarcely conceivable. It is he who invents expedients for meeting an inconvenience which even an anxious parent is disposed to think might be endured without complaint. The strength of his position is that he is not called upon to defend Providence for permitting the evil he combats, nor to assume the responsibility of its moral effect upon the patient. Pain is his antagonist, which he fights without intermission, whose origin he has no leisure to speculate upon, whose energy takes him every hour of his day to confront and encounter. It may be that he acquires a sort of respect for it by dint of continual fighting, and gets to like a good honest deadly disease, which calls forth every faculty of his mind, and everything he knows or can learn; but, at all events, it keeps him in constant exercise and holds every faculty in full strain.

Sir Robert Christison, the records of whose life are just now being given to the public which he served with unflinching energy during a long career, carries us at once into this busy, thoughtful, yet practical, atmosphere of a physician's life, so full of work and observation, and instantaneous practical adaptation of every mental discovery. His autobiography is the retrospect of a man who has not yet assumed the more or less pathetic position of old age, but whom it still amuses as well as pleases to look back over the lines of a constantly occupied and useful life to the youthful beginnings which were in complete harmony with its after results, to the gradually growing reputation and eminence secured by year after

year of strenuous work. In many respects Dr Christison was a fortunate man. He seems to have been happy in retaining the friends and colleagues of his youth, and in suffering none of those disruptions of locality and connection which to so many break life into chapters, and deprive it of the advantages of continuity. In Edinburgh he was born, and there flourished and won the best prizes of his profession, and died full of years and honours. He was the son of a professor in Edinburgh University—he himself held a chair there for more than fifty years. His life was thus spent among the surroundings in which he had been born, in habits thoroughly congenial and familiar, and amid circumstances, natural and hereditary, such as give weight and fitness to the great position into which he grew. It is difficult to exaggerate in one way the advantages of such a natural beginning. They may give in some cases a certain narrowness to the character, a local peculiarity which restrains development: but this was not the case with Dr Christison; and from every other point of view the benefits of this natural consistency are great. The man who is so entirely representative of the place, and the place which so fitly, with such hereditary appropriateness, enframes the man, enhance and set off each other. The admirable good sense, moderation, and reasonableness of the great doctor take a certain glorifying touch of the picturesque from this congenial background: he is the natural representative of a culture and science which have always carried, so to speak, a sprig of heather in their learned bonnet, and been of Edinburgh first, and after of the world.

The account which Sir Robert

gives of his reasons for writing the Autobiography which his sons, who had never heard anything of its existence, found "written in a clear and beautiful hand, almost without correction or erasure, and entirely free from blot from beginning to end," is very interesting and agreeable. We have said that there is hardly anything of the old man in the point of view of the autobiographer. Should the reader happen to be an idle person, unacquainted with the relaxation which lies in a change of work, he will perhaps contemplate with surprise the pleasure and sense of leisure felt by the old professor and physician when he takes up for his holiday the composition of a volume; but the student and laborious intellectual workman will understand it with full and pleasant sympathy, — a sympathy all the more delightful that it is but seldom called forth.

"I have not the vanity to think that the incidents of my life, uneventful as it has been to all but myself, can convey either encouragement, or warning, or instruction to those whom I must some day soon leave behind me in this world. But having lately [23d February 1871] entered on the fiftieth year of my professorship, and having just finished my University Lectures for the season with a week of fatiguing work, I find I require relaxation from routine toil in my professorial and professional duties, as well as from a very unusual amount of the turmoil of public strife in this turbulent city during the last six months. Could I as easily reach the foot of a Highland mountain, or the shore of a Highland loch, as I can betake myself to this sheet of paper, climbing the mountain and rowing on the loch would be my choice for repose and refreshment. I must stick to town, however, for some months longer, before earning a right to the pleasures of idleness; and it has occurred to me that there may be complete distraction from ordinary mental

pursuits, as well as the relief always derived from amusement, in thus recalling something of what I have done, or witnessed, from a position of some little prominence, in which I was placed at a very early age. Moreover, the time cannot be far off when the duty will be imposed on some kind friend of furnishing half a column of biography to the newspapers, and upon some President the labour of an obituary sketch for his address at the annual opening meeting of the Royal Society; and having myself felt the irksomeness of ferreting out sound information in the case of my departed friends in the like circumstances, it may be an act of mercy to furnish my future biographer with facts in my own case from the fountain-head."

The early incidents thus pleasantly introduced are not, perhaps, of thrilling interest; but the view we obtain of the vigorous and healthful spirit returning at seventy-four, with all a boy's freshness, to the records of a schoolboy's life, remembering the playmates, the punishments, the successes, even the copy of Latin verses, "a novel exercise," which perhaps would not obtain so much credit at Eton or Harrow as it seems to have done in Edinburgh, — is altogether a pleasant and enlivening sight. Dr Christison came of a stalwart race. His father, Professor of Latin in Edinburgh, was "the strongest man in the parish" where he began his career, and once pursued and caught successfully, on foot, a runaway pony, which had bolted with his son when a child on its back. Of his brothers, one became Sheriff-Substitute, an office highly esteemed in Scotland, in Ayrshire; and on for fifty years held the modest yet not undignified position of parish minister. It was thus a family distributed among the higher professions, and so devoted, each in his own place, to the service of his

country, after a fashion less general nowadays, when both Church and State have suffered changes in Scotland as elsewhere. The mother, who was "a first-rate domestic administrator"; the father, "perpetually succumbing to indiscriminate charity," unable to resist the prayer of a beggar,—give us a glimpse into the nature of the household, which was kept in good order by the domestic administrator, "not without an occasional knock or two" of the summary wholesome discipline, so much simpler than the elaborate mental tortures to which children are now subjected, which was paramount in those days. Dr Christison had the usual little band of distinguished men as his schoolfellows, small as they must always be among the flood of the unremarkable, but showing well, the successful half-dozen, half a century later: Sir James Matheson, the great China merchant, Lord Marjoribanks, Sir David Dundas, and two or three more. "It is a common saying," he tells us, with a delightful local phraseology, which will at once commend itself to the intelligent reader, "that a man's place in society does not often fall according to his place at school—that boobies may make a figure, and duxes none, on the stage of life. This notion may be a solace to boobies and their parents, but I am convinced it is a fatal mistake." It scarcely seems necessary to explain that "booby" is the name given, or which used to be given, in Scotland to the dreary lingerer at the bottom of the class, as "dux" was its triumphant leader. We may be sure that Robert Christison was never booby on those somewhat riotous but vigorous benches, where the tawse was still the living instrument of punishment. "If he was Latin dux," says the Doctor,

with the liveliest reality of feeling, speaking of an unforgotten rival who had made ungenerous suggestions, sixty years before, about the Professor's son, "I was Greek dux." Of his stories of the High School at this period we will quote but one. The well-known Professor Pillans, then on his promotion, had been appointed Rector, in succession to an eccentric old man, under whom the boys had learned various evil ways. The new master had been obliged to resort to what the Doctor calls the *summum supplicium* of the school, which cast awe upon all the urchins looking on breathless—a result which probably would not have happened at Eton.

"Pillans had achieved a victory; but there was still one remaining trick for him to discover and quash. He had not yet used the 'taws' in the ordinary way, but soon found a suitable occasion. Fraser had taught us that masters were apt to be sometimes too severe with their punishments, and therefore authorised us to count his 'palmies,' and to call out when we thought the culprit had enough. Accordingly, when Pillans inflicted the first whack, the whole class, on every side around him, sung out 'One!' Pillans, much startled, looked round and round with a threatening air, but took no other notice. The class went on—'Two—Three—Four,' and now added, 'That's enough! that's enough! that's enough!' Pillans, however, went on with five—six, and then stopped. The same morning there arose a second occasion for the tawse; but he put off execution till the afternoon. Before commencing, he promised us the classical punishment of decimation, if we should repeat the morning's offence. But decimation leaves many chances of escape, and had no terrors for us. Again, at the first stroke, the whole class shouted 'One!' Pillans, highly incensed, vowed repetition of the *summum supplicium*, the horrors of which were fresh in our recollection. At the second stroke, one single voice only—that of a class-favourite and well-behaved boy, Arthur Welsh, son

of Welsh of Collin—shouted out the numeral 'Two!' A momentary pause and pang of distress was followed by a universal shout of laughter, to which Pillans joined his quiet smile,—taking, with great tact, no further notice."

Dr Christison pauses in his description of his school to add a curious argument in favour of classical training,—one which would not, we fear, strike any one as very conclusive now, since it refers to a time when the age spent at school was that between eight and fifteen—but which yet, without this limitation, may weigh on behalf of those, at least, whose brains are not of a versatile and all-embracing character. "Tuition," he says,—

"Tuition, following nature's indication, should be directed not so anxiously to fill the too youthful mind with knowledge, as to develop and strengthen its powers,—to train and not to cram it. But the mind is not to be trained to accuracy, endurance, and depth, by the hasty cultivation of a great variety of arts and sciences. That method can teach only superficial thinking. The mind must be exercised with perseverance on a few subjects only,—which must, of course, be well chosen. And what choice can be more apt than the study of the languages and literature of ancient Greece and Rome? Of all the studies suitable for boyhood, there is no other, so far as I can see, which is so likely to strengthen the memory, attention, imagination, and judgment. There is none so capable of attaining that object, and at the same time so attractive,—or so certain to instil taste, morality, patriotism, and other virtues,—or so useful for imperceptibly infusing an accurate and ready use of the English language,—or so indispensable as the groundwork for the acquisition of foreign modern tongues. Therefore I say in 1871, up with Latin and Greek for boys, and down with George Combe. Leave other weighty matters till a later age, when greater maturity of intellect, and previous classical training, will render other knowledge much more easy of pursuit."

This opinion refers entirely to the boys at the High School, and Dr Christison speaks of himself as having gone on during the next six years to a very much extended course, ending in "so much of the practice of physic as enabled me at the age of twenty to undertake with some sense of security the duties of Resident Medical Officer in the Royal Infirmary." In England, at the present time, a young man of twenty has but just left his public school, and is a freshman at the university; where, if he wants to take the highest honours, he will continue studies more or less of the same description as those which have occupied him at school. England is, we believe, the only country in the world where this course is persisted in, and where young men emerge from their colleges at twenty-three or so, as yet wholly unacquainted with the special training of the professions which are to provide them with a living.

Dr Christison has a great many stories to tell of his class-fellows and professors, some of them full of humour, some a little too medical, perhaps, to be attractive to the ordinary reader. The sketches which he gives of the notable men of the time are wonderfully clear and vivid, though in many cases the objects have so long disappeared, that to quote the terse little description in which our author sets them, would convey but little enlightenment. There is one ludicrous if slightly profane incident of after-dinner speechifying, which we may permit ourselves to quote. The reader must fill in the scene with the background of vigorous young doctors and budding leaders of science, a little rough perhaps among themselves in the exuber-

ance of youth and intimacy. The occasion was one which excited them all, being the institution of the Observatory on the Oalton Hill, a great event in the scientific history of the moment. Professor Playfair was in the chair, and closely watched by the younger portion of his hearers, who were aware of a great tendency he had to "stick to the paper" in his University lectures, and unwillingness to deliver himself to the dangers of impromptu speech. Perhaps it was with a malicious desire to test the Professor's powers, that some of the hearers suggested to a certain "Colonel Smith, commanding the artillery of the district," to propose Playfair's health. This warrior was unaccustomed to public speaking, and performed his duty in the following desperate way:—

"'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I have the honour to propose a toast, which I am sure you will all be delighted to drink. This is the health of our most distinguished chairman, Professor Playfair. (Prolonged applause.) Professor Playfair, gentlemen, is a man—is a man—gentlemen, Professor Playfair—Professor Playfair, gentlemen—I say, gentlemen, Professor Playfair is a man who—a man—Professor Playfair is a man, gentlemen—is a man who—who—I say again, gentlemen, Professor Playfair—By God, gentlemen, Professor Playfair is a man to go even to hell with!'

"A short pause of horror, a universal peal of laughter, and a round of hearty applause, successively followed this unprecedented harangue. Then came a silence of deep curiosity to know how Playfair would take it up. But Playfair had been fairly roused, and was not taken aback. 'Gentlemen,' he replied, 'I have to thank you very much for your cordial concurrence in the toast which you have paid me the compliment of drinking. But I know not where to find words adequate to express the acknowledgments due from me to the gallant Colonel for the very

uncommon proof he has given of his regard and affection for me. We have heard of many instances in history of great attachment between friend and friend. But the gallant officer has surpassed them all. For, in the history of the world, I am not aware of any man, since the days of Pylades and Orestes, having been willing to accompany his friend—to the place which he has mentioned.'

Dr Christison's progress through his studies is recorded with all the cheerful good sense of his character. He had at first wished to be an engineer, but that was a profession then but little encouraging to the novice, or rather to the father of the novice, being still in its heroic stage, concerned with lighthouses, and bridges, and breakwaters, not yet entered upon the gainful way of railways, nor offering fortune. Sir Robert, however, found in his after life as a physician that his engineering instincts were more than once very useful to him. He began his special medical studies with something of the reluctance which so many students of medicine feel towards the terrible demonstrations necessary for their profession—a reluctance and disgust which some never fully surmount. "My earliest recollection of my new existence is of horror at beholding from a short distance, and for the first time in my life, a dead human being, and of an anxious longing for the close of the Doctor's first lecture." But we soon find him enjoying a professional joke, and, what is still more wonderful, entering, not without reliash, into the horrible nocturnal adventures of the resurrectionists—adventures to which their risk, and the mixture of horror and daring, gave a sort of charm, wonderful though it seems to realise it. There were other and more wholesome hours to sweeten the early drudgery—fresh mornings

at the Physic Garden, where Dr Rutherford, the uncle of Sir Walter Scott, lectured among the early dews in a beautiful style, with "pronunciation fine and scarcely Scotch," and many a little characteristic which might have promoted him to a place in the gallery of fiction had Scott ever wanted a botanical professor—and gay evenings, half pleasure half science, among the chemical retorts and dangerous essences with which the youngsters repeated the experiments of the laboratory with modifications and additions of their own.

This hearty youthful life, full of interest and activity, with that foundation of the practical in all its studies which makes a medical education different from every other, and adds even to the most intellectual a moderating influence of fact and substance, keeping down the fancy and chasing all fumes of visionary excitement from the brain, is placed before us with the brightness of reality. The sharers of this life and its teachers stand all clearly out in the honest daylight, a world of busy men, each individual, yet all absorbed in the teaching, observations, and experiments of an ever-progressing real work, singularly different and distinct from those many records of student life which the vaguer arts have placed before us. The young literary men, the poets, the philosophers, children of fancy, wear their rue with a difference. Their lingerings over books and thoughts, their many illusions in respect to the power and place of literature, and their own gifts and possible achievements, their endless talk and intercommunion, the vapours of their morning dreams, find no balance in the doctor's story of all he heard and did, and strenuously strove to find out and know in the days when he was

young like them. Sir Walter himself was about Edinburgh streets at this time: his romances were coming out one by one, giving each a thrill of excitement which ran through the world. Christopher North was at the height of his career. Lockhart on one side, Jeffrey and all his men on the other, were still there, to our imagination, filling up the old town. When we look to the literary history of the time, we feel as if there could be no room for other interests,—as if it would be impossible to live within the narrow boundaries of the old city without being affected by one or other of the bands of writers whose rush and lively encounter, and the glitter of their arms and the sound of their tilting, have left echoes down to our own time; or to remain unconscious of the paramount influence of that noble serene genius which by itself filled Edinburgh and made it illustrious. But the world is broader, more independent than we think: and here, it is apparent, was another section of life as vivacious, as full of keen intellectual vitality, pursuing learning upon the same oatmeal, yet scarcely touched by that flood and fulness of literary inspiration which seems to us to fill up all the available space. Dr Christison has a page or two of admiration for Wilson, whose connection with the University makes it difficult to leave him out from the group of professors; but he has not a word for any of his other great contemporaries. His mind is full of other things: his own comrades, too, were some of them, men of genius, and many full of ability and power. They had ends more tangible set before them than those pursued by the brethren of the pen. Their intellectual development took another turn. So

far as we can see from the physician's record, they were almost entirely unaffected by that which seems to us by far the greatest influence of the time. This is confusing at first—but afterwards, when we think of it, throws a whimsical light upon the peculiarities of humanity, and gives us a sense of the wealth and variety of human thought and pursuits, and the breadth of nature, which is satisfactory, and, on the whole, comfortable. The sturdy mother does not put all her eggs in one basket. She has force enough to run in all the channels of work and life, and does not, as we sometimes think, concentrate in one branch of achievement all her powers of operation. It is more interesting to see how busy the young men were in the medical schools, how little attention they had to give to any theories but their own, and how they concentrated themselves upon the problems of their profession with but a secondary attention for anything else, than if they had all been turned towards the ways of the Muses. They had a fever to occupy them just then, which was of more interest than the *Waverley* Novels—a fine original type, not the fatal typhus, nor yet the new-fangled, only half-identified typhoid of our time, but an independent Edinburgh variety, which, as Dr Christison describes it, was a thoroughly satisfactory and picturesque form of disease—just the kind of fever which would tell well in fiction, and one of which, unless he had all the worse luck, the patient was almost certain to recover.

The description of this epidemic, with its well-defined symptoms—the high fever which ran its course, and then disappeared of its own accord in the sudden and profuse perspiration which was nature's

remedy, with the almost certainty of recurring again in lessened violence, and disappearing finally in the same simple way—is given with the most lucid force, emphasised as it is by young Christison's practical experiences as a patient as well as doctor. He makes this disease the occasion for a discussion of the old practice of blood-letting, which has been so entirely abandoned in modern practice, and of which there is now so general a terror. Dr Christison, however, does not agree in the sweeping condemnation of this manner of treatment which has become a tenet with the present generation. He says simply that the type of disease has changed. That it does so change is one of the most curious and the least contestable of facts. It seems scarcely too much to say that there is a fashion in disease as there is in dress. Who ever hears now of influenza which used to pass like a wave over the population, and take all strength and savour out of a host of sufferers without any apparent cause? or who had ever heard then of the blood-poisoning which nowadays seems to lie at the bottom of every fatal complaint? Perhaps we will be told that the insidious influenza was but another form of the same thing. Dr Christison quotes from Professor Gregory a curious, almost amusing account of the undermining power of that antiquated malady as affecting no less a subject than the British fleet:—

“The most remarkable instance I have heard of its rapid progress occurred in our fleet, which was watching the Dutch ships in the Texel. I received the whole account from the lieutenant of a 64-gun ship, which was one of the British fleet. The whole fleet was in excellent health and spirits, when a cutter arrived from the Admir-

alty, and the signal was given for an officer from each ship. An officer was accordingly sent, with a boat's crew, from every vessel, and returned with orders, carrying with them also, however, the influenza. In the lieutenant's ship, whose crew consisted of 525 men, he was one of two who alone escaped it, and the other ships scarcely fared better. Very early one morning the look-out frigates gave the signal for a fleet in sight. The seamen immediately sprang to quarters with alacrity, and the fleet was cleared for action, for the Dutchmen were as numerous and as strong as they, and would naturally seize the favourable opportunity when their antagonists were scarcely able to oppose them. This state of courage and activity continued for a short while. But the men soon began to drop down beside their guns, completely exhausted; and the officers, themselves hardly able to stand, found, on making their rounds, the seamen lying extended on the deck, with their heads resting on the guns which they had to defend. As the day dawned, the supposed enemy drew near, and was discovered to be an innocent fleet of British merchantmen under convoy from the Baltic. Although the helpless state of the British fleet was well known in Holland, no attempt was made to molest them, and for a very good reason, for the Dutchmen were in no better plight themselves. The state of feebleness brought on by that epidemic was most extraordinary, and frequently formed the first symptom of its invasion. Many a stout young soldier, when he went to parade in complete health, dropped down suddenly in the ranks in a state of perfect exhaustion. The epidemic raged most violently in July, the season of hay-making; and I have been told of the haymakers attempting to struggle with their sense of fatigue, but being obliged in a few minutes to lay down their scythes and stretch themselves on the field."

The fever, however, is a subject to which our doctor returns more than once with a certain whimsical sense of ownership. The epidemic seems to have broken out twice in Edinburgh, in 1817—when Christi-

son was called to replace in the Infirmary a comrade attacked by it, and thus began his professional career, although he too very soon succumbed to the infection—and again in 1827. On both these occasions the Scotch doctors bled their patients as freely as Italian doctors have the credit of doing now—with, our physician believes, excellent effect. "It gave great relief for some hours, and often broke the force of the fever permanently," he says. . . . "It is in vain for recent authors on fever, who never saw it with its early characters, to say that blood-letting was a fashionable error, and the doctrine of change of type a mere apology to cover it. I have produced evidence, which no opponent has ever attempted to shake, that in 1833 I recognised the change of type before adopting the change of treatment."

"But at all events, there is no ground for the modern notion, that permanent damage was done to the constitution by the free shedding of blood in those fevers. Convalescence went on as quickly, and was concluded as thoroughly, in those who were bled as in those who were not so treated. My companions in the end suffered nothing. As for myself, I was bled first to 30 ounces and next day to 20 ounces in my first fever; to 24 ounces in my second; and again to 24 ounces in my third,—all in the course of eighteen months. But my constitutional vigour was not in any degree impaired, so far as I could discover. I retained the same strength, swiftness, and endurance in all exercises as before my fevers; and I had no reason to complain of any falling off in vigour or steadiness in any mental pursuit."

The medical attendants in the Edinburgh Infirmary seem to have suffered greatly from what Dr Christison calls "this interesting epidemic." Among twelve of them, seventeen cases occurred in

two years, some having it twice, Christison himself three times, and manfully making notes all through, of his sensations, for the good of the other patients. It is good indeed to hear of the interest taken in their work by these young men, who were not in any way unlike others of their age in their tastes and inclinations. Besides their hard daily work, it was agreed among them that when any one was out late at any social entertainment, he should on his return to the hospital make a round through all the wards to see that everything was going on well, and all the nurses at their posts. One can imagine circumstances in which the apparition of a young fellow, fresh from a convivial party, bursting in in the small hours, would have been but a doubtful advantage in the stillness of the hospital wards, when all that could sleep must have been wrapped in repose: and Edinburgh in the beginning of the century was not a pattern city. But dissipation could scarcely coexist with such a rule, and everything indicates that the young doctors were as devoted to the service of humanity as it is possible for fallible human creatures to be. They preserved their health and abundant spirits by Highland expeditions, the records of which are certainly not new, and can scarcely be called very entertaining, but which yet give us a glimpse of the Highlands as they were, when tourists were few, and there was as yet but little departure from the habitual tranquillity of the mountains and glens on their behalf. We are sorry to say that Dr Christison's occasional indications of rustic habits are not very delightful. Whisky is in the foreground in many such scenes; and a chosen group or two assembled in a parish where the

solemnities of the Sacrament are in progress, remind us more than we could have wished of the orgies of Burns's "Holy Fair." It is more agreeable to hear of the entertainment afforded at the farmhouse of Ardcheanacrochan, where "the intelligent farmer Mr Stewart" received visitors as a Highland chieftain might have done, at his own table, although the departing guests were supposed to leave upon the board where they had dined an equivalent, "just as some patients do," says Dr Christison—always professional—"when quitting the physician's consulting-room." Most people know the castellated mansion, with charges not out of proportion to its grandeur, which now guards the defile of the Trossachs at the same spot, and bears the same seven-leagued name.

If these simple travels formed a delightful relaxation for the young doctors, an excitement of a very different kind was in their professional life—one which makes us shudder, yet which did not horrify them. Terrible, indeed, must be the drawback which will neutralise all pleasure in a dangerous adventure, and make a midnight raid with the risk of being shot at altogether without pleasure to young men of high spirit, and conscience somewhat blunted by the necessities of their profession. Dr Christison does not seem himself to have had any share in the excitements of resurrection-men, but his stories, drawn from companions who "had so great a passion for adventure" as to take delight in these ghastly exploits, are as vivid as if he had shared them. Sometimes there was almost a fight over the terrible booty, one party claiming a grave, which another all but carried by storm, not without defiances and threats, and even pistols

presented, which, however, no one dared to fire, to call forth upon themselves the fury of the outraged village and its band (though timid) of churchyard watchers. There may still be seen in some Scotch churchyards the little watchhouse built for the shelter of the nightly guardians; and we have ourselves heard a piteous narrative from the lips of a bereaved mother of how she looked out at night from her window, and took a little forlorn comfort to see through her tears the light burning in the midst of the darkness, which proved that the fathers of the village in their turns were keeping watch over the enclosure in which her dead children lay. There is something hideous in the thought; and wonderful is the suggestion that the hairbreadth escape, the wild rush through the dark country roads, the excitement of the danger, and gratification of success, made these nocturnal expeditions amusing to the medical adventurers, notwithstanding the ghastly character of their errand and their booty. The following scene gives a glimpse of one such adventure, from their point of view:—

“In the lonely churchyards,” says the narrator, “the watchmen were apt to be inefficient through cowardice. William Cameron met with the following exciting illustration of this. He went, with the necessary *corps d’élite*, to a lonely churchyard seven miles from town, separated from the highway by a hedge, a hollow grass field, and the churchyard wall. On arriving at the place, they observed light issuing from the vestry window. A scout was therefore sent across the field to reconnoitre. His companions, by the light of a young moon, could see him crawl across the grass, and stealthily raise his head over the wall, when the vestry door opened, a man stepped out in the bright light, a shot went off, the scout dropped down motionless at the foot of the wall,

and the shooter retired within the vestry, and shut the door. A cloud obscuring the moon, prevented Cameron from recognising the state of matters. A consultation was held at the hedge whether their comrade should be succoured; and a second scout was about to proceed towards him, when he appeared at the other side of the hedge, laughing at the issue of his adventure, and explaining that he had merely ducked down to hide himself when the watchman stepped forth to fire into vacuity. They then remained quiet for half an hour, when the same farce of firing was repeated, to frighten away depredators, and satisfy the parish that watch was faithfully kept. Taking advantage of the discovery that the churchyard was never patrolled, the spoilers entered it during an interval between the alarms; and as their object lay on the other side of the church from the vestry, they carried on their operations, with a short interruption as firing-time came round, completed their work, and decamped with their plunder.”

The still deeper horrors of the Burke and Hare murders brought the whole dreadful system to an end, in the universal outcry of horror and dismay with which its revelation was received. Nothing, perhaps, in modern times sent so wild a thrill of alarm and consternation through the whole country. Dr Christison himself had the task of examining the body of the victim through which the discovery was made, and his description makes it impossible to believe that the anatomist, whose dreadful wants were supplied in this way, could have been innocent of all knowledge of how his subjects were supplied. The inconceivable indifference which could blind a man’s eyes in his own interest, even to such a possibility, is one of the most appalling suggestions that could well be made. Absolute consent to the process would almost be less horrible. Dr Christison

does not attempt to defend the memory of Dr Knox, though he thinks it is "absurd to charge him with anything more than blamable carelessness." The general condemnation, however, was much more decided in its expression. The common intelligence could not comprehend how it was that a skilled investigator into the secrets of the human frame could have been blind to the fact that one after another had come to an untimely and unaccountable end; and it might well have been added that the investigation could not be worth much which left such a horrible possibility undiscovered. Vengeance followed sure and speedy; and it is with a feeling of remorseless satisfaction that we read of the miserable depths into which the great anatomist fell:—

"He never recovered in Edinburgh society from the stigma which thus attached to him. His talent as a lecturer kept his class-room crowded as usual, but only for a few years. The numbers fell off at last; he left Edinburgh; and after various vicissitudes, and successive descents, he sank, before his death in London, to a state not much above destitution. One of his last occupations was that of lecturer, demonstrator, or showman, to a travelling party of Ojibbeway Indians."

Dr Christison's studies were not confined to Edinburgh alone. With a delightful loyalty he places the advantages of his native town in this way far above even the wider spheres of London and Paris. "I doubt," he says, "whether any other medical school offers such a union of advantages as our resident Infirmary officers enjoy—ample materials for study, able superiors engaged in teaching and ever on a level with the times, a confidential position of much trust, companions from the ablest students of a popu-

lous University, museums and libraries freely open, professors and others to whom it is a labour of love to foster diligence and talent, a city abounding with all sorts of rational amusement, and good society easy of access." But the young man's wise parents thought it better for him to know something about other schools and methods, and in the year 1820, when he was twenty-three, he sailed in "one of the famous Leith smacks," with a somewhat heavy heart, for London. Not only was it the first separation from his family, but there was already a tenderer interest to call his lingering looks back to Edinburgh. The Doctor tells the story of his love with charming *naïveté*, yet reserve; but when we learn that the object of his youthful vows was "still a few months under fifteen," we cannot but feel that the separation must have been advantageous to all parties. It is, however, a little romance of the most faithful attachment which is twined very modestly with the thread of less moving story—a romance which has tremendous shadows, quite tragically overclouding the young physician, and sending him half despairing to take refuge in work—but which ended at last, eight years after, in a happy marriage.

Things were far, however, from this result when he went to London,—not to seek his fortune, but to increase his knowledge. He was delighted by "the gorgeous vernal green of Kent and Essex" which burst upon him as the smack entered the Thames; though horrified by the sight,—an extraordinary one, surely, at that date (1820), and which he calls "a very dubious element of the picturesque,"—of "the remains of some pirates hanging in chains from tall gibbets erected on the sandbanks."

His enthusiasm, however, failed when he found himself at St Bartholomew's Hospital, where he tells us "the pupil found no teacher, and in the medical wards much more to teach others than for himself to learn"—a state of affairs injurious, no doubt, to his progress, but not unagreeable to his self-esteem and lively national prepossessions. Instead of pursuing his studies, he was thus called into active service, discovering many "instances of deplorable results from the inadequate service in the medical department."

He adds, however, that the instruction in surgical subjects was of a very different character, though he condemns strongly the practice of separating the two branches of medical instruction, and launching hundreds of students into the ranks of general practitioners in England who knew next to nothing of medicine proper, their training having been entirely surgical. The other hospitals scarcely pleased our Scotch student better. At one place he found the lectures characterised by "shocking indecency without any qualifying wit;" and from another came away sickened and disgusted by an unsuccessful operation—although, at the same time, "the pure thoughts, sound reasoning, beautiful language, and noble delivery of John Abernethy" filled him with admiration and delight. It was only for a very short time, however, that he was kept in this unprofitable course. He was called home very soon to the death-bed of his father, to whom he offers a fine and eloquent tribute. It was, he says, his first knowledge of loss by death:—

"Nevertheless, the blow did not fall so hard as I anticipated from the noble character of my father, his evident strong attachment, and the constant interest he had taken in my studies—an interest so great in his

own favourite branch, the higher mathematics, that he made of me almost a fellow-student; for his figure, carriage, and gait, his countenance and its varying expression in conversation, his very mind, were all so impressed on me, that they seemed, as it were, ever with me or within call. Time, which tries all things, has tested me for a term fast approaching to sixty years, but has left that inward feeling unblunted. When my father left this life, I could well have said of him—

'*Questi che mai da me non fia diviso.*'"

After this young Christison went to Paris, his account of which is very lively and graphic. It was in the days of the Bourbon restoration, before any indications had appeared of the rapid downfall of the restored dynasty. The sense of novelty and surprise with which the new country filled him is such as much less intelligent observers would now be ashamed to own to; but it would be well for the most accustomed tourists to be as well able to take all the benefits of the novelty as the young doctors seem to have been. We doubt whether a party of medical students of the present day would be so much at their ease with a new language. The young men of course noted, as in duty bound, the inferior stature and appearance of the soldiers who seemed to them to swarm everywhere, and the noisy chatter and effusiveness of ordinary social intercourse. They had not, however, any deeper observation to record of the state of public feeling, though they attended the memorial service in St Denis in commemoration of the death of Louis XVI., and went about everywhere with eyes well open. The only historical incident Dr Christison records is that of the birth of Henri Cinq—that child of promise, whose infant importance came to

so little, the shadow king of modern romance. The sex of the expected heir, the child of miracle, was to be indicated by the number of guns fired, which were to be twenty-five for a princess, fifty for a prince.

"In the dark early morning hours of September 29, I was roused from sleep by the report of the first gun. When I had counted twenty-five, there was a pause, probably not unintentional, brief, but long enough to allow me to heave a sigh for the extinction of the only remaining hope for the continuance of the Bourbon family on the French throne. In a few seconds, however, the salute recommenced with accelerated speed, and very soon the completed fifty guns announced in the darkness that an heir to the crown had been born for France. After breakfast I went to the Tuileries to watch the feelings of the citizens. On the way every face I met seemed joyous. Knots of people had assembled under the windows of the apartments occupied by the Duchess-mother, and all seemed cordially to welcome the event. Presently a large window in the first floor was thrown open, and to my astonishment the nurse, in a peasant's costume, exhibited the infant in its swaddling-clothes to the view of a delighted and applauding crowd. Others may have been chewing the cud of mortification at home; but there could be no doubt that the crowds of Parisians who succeeded one another below the Duchess's windows, and were favoured from time to time by the reappearance of the infant, were highly pleased, and sympathised sincerely with the Royal family."

Royal families, however, and all such inconsiderable trifles, were as nothing to our young man in comparison with the hospitals, which were his first object in Paris. He was infinitely better satisfied with them than with the English ones; and though he had exceptions to make to the manners of the teachers and the appearance of the students—"a very dirty, ill-dressed

set to squeeze among,"—and also much criticism of operations which did not turn out well, and which are minutely described but scarcely adapted for the perusal of the general reader, he was at the same time dazzled by the number of eminent names which he met at every turn, and often delighted by the clearness and force of the instructions. The *bonhomie* of the great operator who did something horrible to a child, so courteously and kindly that the unfortunate little creature scarcely felt the suffering inflicted ("he did not take a single step in the operation without asking and obtaining the child's consent"); the novelty of the views upon tetanus; the treatment of the insane by kindness and indulgence (a thing quite new in medical practice); and many other purely medical subjects, are narrated with spirit and interest amid a succession of lively portraits of the leading medical authorities in Paris, which, to those who know their names better than we can profess to do, must be full of interest. Orfila's lectures on poisons suggested to Dr Christison his own subsequent researches on that subject, and in many other ways he profited greatly by his Parisian experience. One small but interesting discovery which we can verify from our own knowledge, may afford relief in some circumstances of alarm, and, as it is easily remembered, is worth quoting. It is the sign considered in France infallible of madness in dogs. Dr Christison was taken by his friend, the well-known William Cullen, to an enclosure where the great surgeon Majendie kept for purposes of experiment a number of unfortunate dogs:—

"On first entering with Cullen the yard where the dogs were kept, chained each to his own kennel, they

set up a general concert of frantic barking, amidst which Cullen called my attention to a cry quite different from all the rest, commencing with a bark, but instantly changed to a short sharp howl or painful yell. 'That,' said Cullen, 'is our mad dog; and they say here it is a perfectly diagnostic sign.'

Christison had long afterwards the happiness of setting at ease, by this piece of observation, the alarms of an anxious father whose child had been bitten by a dog, which, when seen by the doctor, broke forth into "a grand, clear bow-wow-wow" that proved at once his sanity and harmlessness.

On his return home, when passing through London, our young doctor was met, to his extreme astonishment, by the question, how his canvass was going on for the Chair of Medical Jurisprudence? and found that his friends had been for some time working for him with this object, which was speedily attained. The Chair was in the patronage of the Crown, and though, for once in a way, the best man seems to have been secured for the post, it is evident that this was not much more than an accident, and that if he had been at the very head of medical science without interest, and urgent advocates to help him before the great persons who were supreme, his skill and knowledge would have profited him but little.

Most of the Chairs in Edinburgh University depended, however, upon patrons still less likely to be impartial than the advisers of his Majesty—and this, though at a later period, formed one of the chief controversies in Dr Christison's life. That such a piece of patronage should be vested in the Town Council of Edinburgh is so curious a fact in history, and the struggle to throw off this anoma-

lous rule was so strenuous and prolonged, that it is not wonderful it should take a large place in the experience of those who helped to overthrow it. The Town Council in the Scotch capital was perhaps composed of men more likely to estimate the importance of able instructors than most other town councils, but that is not to say that it possessed either the knowledge or the freedom necessary for such an important charge. It is common to add that truly English test by which so many logically indefensible institutions have been guarded—that it worked well: and it would be impossible to deny that many admirable men filled its seats of learning, even under the sway of the Provost and Bailies; but, as Dr Christison pointed out, this was during a time when the Corporation was wise enough to leave the *Senatus* to manage its own affairs. This had ceased to be the case in his own day, and very soon after his first appointment to the Chair of Medical Jurisprudence the struggle began in earnest. The rejection by the Town Council of two candidates, undeniably the best, for two vacant chairs,—Abercrombie for the Practice of Medicine, Babbage for Mathematics,—in favour of persons of lower achievements but local interest, as well as many paltry attempts at interference in the internal economy of the University, pointed out in a very evident way the disadvantages of this *régime*, and helped to gain the attention of Government to these extraordinary circumstances. The case was fully examined by a Special Commission in 1828, and again by the Burgh Commission in 1833, but it was not till twenty-five years later that the long struggle came to an end, and the Bailies ceased to hold the control of the University in their hands. During the whole of this

time Dr Christison fought the battle of his order, and of that rational self-government which was so doubly necessary in the case of the highest educational institution in the country, with unflinching zeal. The squabbles and pretensions of the city authorities, always so open to satire, the ridiculous motives which actuated them, the political and local controversies which raged, and the influences which were brought to bear upon what ought to have been the dispassionate selection of the best man, afforded naturally a hundred points of attack. "One voted expressly, as he avowed to me, for —, because 'he was asked by a leddy who had lately given him a good job;' another for the same reason, without avowing it. . . . Seven voted for their family doctor."

"On one occasion, when a Bailie was asked by a candidate for his vote, he replied, 'Well, Mr —, I tell you honestly and plainly that I don't care that' (snapping his fingers) 'for the Chair of —; but whoever the Provost votes for, I'll vote for somebody else!' and with this novel and somewhat vague pledge the candidate was obliged to be content. The following strange query was put to the same candidate by one of the Councillors, — 'Are ye a jined member?' The candidate, an Englishman, looked, as he was, completely puzzled, when, to help him out, the Councillor added, 'Are ye a jined member o' onie boadie?' Which question we shall leave as a riddle to our English readers."

Pathetically humorous, too, is the prayer of another unfortunate town councillor, who was attacked by several fair canvassers at once. "O leddies, leddies! I wish ye would gang awa' hame, and let me atten' to my business!" In respect to his own appointment to the Chair of *Materia Medica*, Dr Christison declares that only four

members of the Town Council, among whom is named "Blackwood," the respected founder of the 'Magazine,' then a very influential member of the Corporation, "voted purely because they thought they voted for the right man."

The fluster and bustle of these University elections, the canvassing, the flattery, the intimidation, all the worst features of political struggles in most inappropriate action, are still within the recollection of many. Two Liberal Governments in succession took up the question, but dropped it again—perhaps because of that indifference to purely Scotch questions which it is now hoped to set right by the latest effort of constitutional invention, the Minister for Scotland—perhaps because, as Christison says, it was the policy of the Whigs to flatter and favour the burghs and town councils, "and they had not courage to offend the municipality of Edinburgh." The state of affairs at last got beyond bearing. Not only in the matter of patronage, but in all the internal arrangements of the college, the Town Council interfered. They tired out the *Senatus* by dragging it continually to law, and at last entirely disorganised and discouraged the unfortunate professors. "What the degree of that tyranny is," writes Dr Christison, "you may have some notion of when I tell you that, by proving in their various actions at law their absolute dominion over us, and exercising it with a vengeance, they have at length disintegrated and demoralised the Senate, so that not over three or four members take any active part in the public affairs of the University." "Professors began to confine themselves altogether to class work;

even my own zeal," says Dr Christison, with characteristic consciousness that this was likely to be the last that would give way, "began to flag, and apathy stole over the Senate-hall." "We have got you Professors under our thumb now, and, by —, you shall feel it," said a convivial Lord Provost after dinner. These tyrannies were accompanied by a rapid decrease in the number of students, and every sign of approaching downfall to the great University which had told for so much in the history not of Scotland only, but of the United Kingdom.

The necessary changes were at last effected by the Conservative Government in 1858, through a Bill brought in by Lord Advocate Inglis, now Lord Justice-General, which transferred the government of the University to a "rectorial court of seven select men," in which the Town Council was to have two representatives. It was, if not perfect, "a good workable measure." "We have all worked like Highland chairmen at flitting-time," says Christison, writing to his son in India, "and with such success in every Parliamentary quarter as to lead us to think the Bill quite safe." "Were the opportunity given me of making one single half-hour speech after Adam Black in the House, I could leave him helpless." For the publisher of the '*Edinburgh Review*,' though an enlightened burgher, was yet for town against gown, as was natural, and still managed to keep a share for the Bailies in the new rule. Notwithstanding this drawback, the measure proved to be, as Dr Christison anticipated, eminently "workable," and in a few years the University recovered itself both in numbers, energy, and success. It was not till ten years after,

however, that the privilege of Parliamentary representation was granted to the Scotch universities; and in the agitation which eventually secured this final boon, Dr Christison took no small share.

The second volume, into which our space allows to dip but lightly, is full of matter both amusing and inspiring. Though Christison's autobiography ends with the first, it is still very much in his own words that the story of his life is continued, and it will be inferred from what has been already said that his memoranda and letters are not likely to fail in interest—his correspondence with his sons and with his son's wife in India furnishing large details of his existence at home. There are certain delightful and lifelike (alas! in some instances also deathlike) *aperçus* which he gives us of several notable personages who come across the sphere of his observation from time to time, which are well worthy of being quoted. Such, for instance, is the curious and touching description of the condition of Francis Jeffrey at the end of his busy and highly strained intellectual life:—

"Jeffrey's mind continued vigorous to the last; his account of his illness perspicuous and ingenious; his love of conversation constant, so that he had always the better share of the dialogue even with his physicians; his diction copious, terse, and poetical. When left quiet, however, he was conscious of a tendency to wandering. On shutting his eyes he had constantly, he said, a book or newspaper before him. Now it was a political article in the '*Times*,' powerful and brilliant in composition beyond conception. Again it was a sparkling review, not of his own, but in the '*Quarterly*.' When he opened his eyes he saw through the book, but could read again as soon as he shut them. This was his occupation within a few minutes of his death."

A more curious yet appropriate hallucination could scarcely be imagined. One wonders if it gave the old warrior a faint pang to find that the "sparkling review" of his dying imagination was not his own, but in the 'Quarterly'? There is a most pathetic touch of humour in this affecting story.

And here is a pleasant glimpse of one at whom, thanks to indiscreet disclosures, every contemptible witling now thinks himself at liberty to aim an arrow :—

"I saw a good deal of Thomas Carlyle here last week, and found him a simple-hearted, straightforward man, with all the ingenious felicity and humour in conversation which one would anticipate from his writings; but I was sorry to observe that his physical powers are not retained on a level with those of the mind. He evidently greatly enjoyed our Senatus Symposium, at which the new-made LL.D.'s were present. MacLagan was in great force, and very lucky in his choice of themes. Blackie was just boisterous enough to carry off his peculiar species of humour. Ramsay, the geologist, sang a capital quizz of his great friend Sir Roderick, for returning to his patron the Russian Emperor, from the Ural, without finding for him any 'coal' in any 'hole.' Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, as Rector of St Andrews, was also a guest, and seemed not less delighted than Carlyle. Clearly they find a congress of Edinburgh Professors something very different from a conventicle; and from various quarters I hear of their surprise and pleasure."

Mr Disraeli appears next in this little portrait-gallery in an equally happy light :—

"Yesterday evening I dined with Lord Advocate Gordon to meet Disraeli. He seemed at first a shy, rather silent man; but after the ladies left the table, and the conversation became general, he put his horns out of his shell, and took ample share in what passed. 'Punch,' by whose caricatures he is best known, sadly

misrepresents his face and figure: he is a tall and rather large man, with massive features, every component of which is on a large scale, the mouth especially, which is such as will satisfy even Syme and his dogma about greatness being measurable by the ratio of that feature. His conversation, as one may well suppose, is full of good matter, and enlivened by happy easy diction; and he is a rare anecdotist: he is extremely grave, rarely smiles, and still more rarely laughs; nevertheless, he was fairly overcome in the drawing-room by Lord Neaves's two songs, the 'Origin of Man in a Monad,' and 'The Permissive Bill.'"

There is a period over which the narrators have no resource but to pass hastily, and in which the life of the professor and physician was probably at its saddest. He lost his wife in 1849, and there is an anecdote given of the profoundest, almost womanish, tenderness with which he attended to all her wishes, but nothing from himself to tell what was the dreariness of the bereaved home, or how soon the children got to be their father's companions and comforters. They speak of him throughout as "reserved, and even somewhat unbending and stern in manner,"—a fact which we should not have guessed either from his letters or autobiography. Perhaps he learned silence and self-concentration in the loneliness of the home from which the chief attraction had departed. This was the time in which his success was least assured, when the University was at its lowest ebb, and he found it needful to establish himself in private practice, which did not come largely at first. It is not till 1858, in the moment of triumph for the University, that we begin to find him again. The tide of life flows still more largely in his later years when he became a

potentate in Edinburgh; and the University, with all its humours, the colleagues, the students, the curious cases, the wonderful experiments of the Medical Faculty, unfolded around him as a natural centre. Dr Christison came in contact with almost all that was going on. His first chair, that of Medical Jurisprudence, or Legal Medicine, had given him a share in the conduct of many of the great cases of poisoning which occurred during this period; and he reports that Lord Campbell, while helping to settle the question between the Edinburgh Town Council and the Professors, took occasion to thank him for having "enabled us to hang Palmer," though what that had to do with University reform Dr Christison failed to see! In all things, however, he was the most active, the most unwearied of Dons—which word, however, it is a misnomer to apply to the large and wholesome life of the Scotch Professor, never an esoteric or exotic personage like his more elegant brethren across the Border, but belonging heartily to all the life about him—a Scotsman, an Edinburgh townsman, born to the very manner of the place in which his work and influence lay. Nothing in heaven or earth came amiss to him—from observations on the weather to the newest experiments in chemistry or medicine, from active statesmanship in his particular sphere to the bass part in a manly rolling quartette, with which the Edinburgh Professors astonished the British Medical Association after dinner. As it is by no means necessary that we should quote the most important portions of a book which everybody will read, let us here unbend, like Dr Christison himself, and give the reader the advantage of a little bit of meteorological intui-

tion, or rather observation, very useful to dwellers in high latitudes. Dr Christison had observed that an unusually brilliant display of aurora borealis was invariably followed on the third day by a storm,—a theory which was proved at a most appropriate moment, when the British Association sat at Edinburgh in the year 1834. He applied his observation practically on another occasion as follows:—

"A few years afterwards, while visiting in September a Dumfriesshire friend, who farms a portion of his estate as a study and amusement, we were returning late from a distant dinner-party, when we were greeted on the way home by a magnificent aurora. The weather had long been extremely beautiful, and favourable for the operations of a rather late harvest. I therefore told my prognostic, relating the previous incident as an illustration of its accuracy. My friend was good enough to say that, as he confided in my observation, he should apply it next morning.

"Next morning, at breakfast-time, the farm-steward arrived, as was his wont, for the day's orders. In reply to a question what his people were doing, he said the weather was so fine and steady, that he was thinking to take them from the 'stooks' to repair a river embankment. 'Do no such thing,' was the rejoinder; 'finish the leading of your corn: there is to be a great storm.' 'Weel, sir,' observed the steward, 'I'm sure neither you nor me ever saw a braver day than this in Nithsdale.' 'Never mind that,' replied his master; 'lead your corn and thatch your stacks—you have got all this day to do it. To-morrow you may do what you like; the storm will set in to-morrow forenoon.'

"At breakfast-time next day the steward reappeared for his orders in a most lovely autumn morning, to which he did not fail to call our particular attention. His master was staggered,—till I reminded him that Nithsdale storms usually set in not till eleven in the forenoon. At half-past ten the south and south-west

began to put on an ominous aspect; at eleven, he recognised every indication of a serious storm; and it was resolved that we should go to the field and see what the steward thought of the matter now. Before we reached him, drops of rain began to fall, and the atmosphere had a most lowering appearance. The steward looked steadily aside at his work-people, and was evidently shy of opening the conversation. But when appealed to for his opinion by his master, he said, with great emphasis, 'Weel, sir, it's just looking awfu'. But how ye cam to ken o't yesterday morning is mair than I can tell.' A great storm and flood ensued, and lasted for two days."

This prognostic, Dr Christison adds, he has never found to fail. It would seem to an uninstructed observer as if Scotch farmers, notwithstanding all their enlightenment, stood in need either of a little additional meteorological information or more energy in their operations, since we have ourselves this very year been the astonished and impatient spectator of a fine crop of wheat standing in stooks upon the field, from the 2d to the 22d of September, exposed to a succession of storms, which it would have escaped had it been "led" at a more seasonable interval. Perhaps the instructions of a scientific warlock like Dr Christison might have had some effect upon slow use and wont in this as well as the other case. Clearly the farm-grieve was of opinion that there was magic in it.

We must not attempt to follow the endless series of sketches or vignettes with which Dr Christison's recollections abound. Those of his Edinburgh colleagues are the most vivid, and many a pleasant scene and humorous combination will be found by the reader in the book itself, to which a review can necessarily do no justice.

Dr Christison had his share of

disappointments and mortifications. The post of Principal of the University had been all but given to him; but he was the first to acknowledge that "Grant was the man," when the late admirable Principal appeared from his exile in the East, and united all suffrages—alas! to survive scarcely longer than the much older competitor who so frankly recognised his paramount claims. The old physician was more mortified by finding Lord Rosebery preferred to himself as Rector,—a complimentary office, which it appears would have pleased him. The students who had voted for him "in a vast compact body," came, curiously enough, when the result was known, "to give vent to their mortification, and inquire how I took the current of affairs;" and the old Professor—eighty-three but full of spirit, and with a voice still capable of dominating a multitude—came out on his balcony and addressed them in a philosophical and consolatory speech, which concluded with the reflection that "tout est au mieux dans ce meilleur de mondes." But he was not without a pang when he reflected that his own long services and profound acquaintance with all the wants and wishes of the tumultuous young world about him, were outweighed by the untried charm of the young politician. He ought to have expected, perhaps, that the young constituency would prefer a young man; but it was, we believe, the political aspect thus given to an election which ought to be in an especial degree a mark of honour to the fittest, which affected him most.

However, honours poured upon him in the later part of his life. His baronetcy—a distinction which he wished to refuse, but accepted on the representations of his friends, that it was an honour of-

ferred to his profession and University as well as to himself—was given in 1871, while he was still young, so to speak, not more than seventy-four, and still “up to everything.” A baronetcy, indeed, is a kind of gratification which, we are of opinion, hurts no man. The “Sir Robert” is a kindly title. It leaves the recipient as it found him, a distinguished commoner. And Oxford did herself honour by conferring upon him the gown of red and pink, her highest tribute. (It is amusing to hear that the old Scot liked the boyish row of the *encenia* on the occasion of this great ceremonial.) And his bust was set up in the Library of his own beloved University. What more could mortal man desire? He had little grandchildren to make his home bright, which perhaps was sweeter. And there is a happy mingling of this domestic blessedness in the fact that, in his speech at the dinner given him on completing the fiftieth year of his professorship, the old physician, amid the cheers of his sympathetic audience, announced the delightful fact that his little grandson, the heir of his honours, was that day

two years old. He calls himself “an obstinate old sinner, who cannot forget his youth” on the verge of his eightieth year, and is disposed to grumble over the necessity of staying at the foot of the mountain while the young people get to the top, at eighty-five; but nevertheless was able to climb Ben Vrackie and write nonsense verses descriptive of the same, at eighty-four.

He died in 1882, after a short interval of broken health, saying, with the latest light of life shining upon all he knew and all he had experienced, that “Ohris is ever-thing,” and that “in old age we return to the simple faith of our childhood.” Edinburgh gave him, as was his due, all public honours, and carried him to his grave in solemn state, the whole city joining in grave celebration of the good life and noble, which, with unimpaired dignity, had thus achieved its mortal end. His works are addressed almost entirely to a professional audience: but to any kind of audience, and in all circles, nothing much better could be said of any competitor than that he was such a man.

WHY WE CANNOT TRUST ANOTHER GLADSTONE GOVERNMENT.

WE are all, it is presumed, agreed in supposing that the coming election will be one of unusual importance to the country. Our electoral body, at one step largely and unprecedentedly increased, are to pronounce a decision at what may be fairly termed a turning-point in our history. The old balance of opinion is no longer a guide for speculation; darkness and doubt are in all men's minds; the new, and hitherto untried, force it is which is about to leaven the lump. The occasion then is fraught with interest, and, let us say, with peril. A false step made now may commit this great country to a downward course from which it will be impossible ever to rescue her—a course towards ruin on which the speed will be accelerated as time advances.

The path before us divides and diverges. We may keep to the old path of safety if we are wise and well advised; but there are a thousand allurements, a thousand false lights, tempting to the way of destruction; and the danger of finding that is so great, that every good citizen who has a chance of being listened to by the many, is bound to let his light shine and to direct our goings in the right way. Our ex-Ministers, nothing daunted by past faults and failures, are with characteristic impudence once more displaying their nostrums, and filling the air with proclamations of their power to cure and to regenerate. Even they are a little shy of addressing the old electors, the men on whom they practised such dire deceit in 1880; but are there not 2,000,000 of inexperienced voters to appeal to, men who do not yet know

how bright and boundless popular promises can be, nor the sickness of heart by which the breach of them must and will be followed? It is upon these unpractised minds that the deluders have determined to try their arts. Lands, beeves, learning, prosperity, are in their hands, and will be bestowed on the recently enfranchised if only the givers be brought back to power. Artful tactics, glittering bribes! It is very hard for simple countrymen who are promised enormous and immediate substantial advantages in exchange for their votes, to turn deaf ears to their charm-ers. They are unable to see that the bribes are only dangled before them for an object; they do not remember how often the same bribes have been paraded before with the same object; they do not perceive the dissolution of society which must be entailed if it should be attempted to realise the dazzling pictures. So the danger is immense; for if they should allow themselves to be caught in any numbers by the frauds, they are certain to entail upon their country grievous woe, and certain to be among the first to suffer for their credulity.

Our people are in bad case now; that is true. But why is it so with them? The country has undergone no stroke of ill fortune from without; there has been no coincidence of commercial mischances; no ripening of maladies incidental to our system, no malice of our enemies, has depressed and impoverished us. Yet there is much to make every one of us sorrowful, and angry, and discontented. We have bad trade everywhere. We have thousands of

our artisans and labourers out of work. We are immoderately taxed. Our substance has been wasted and worse than wasted, for it has been spent on sins and follies through which we have been in every way losers. We have lost character as well as substance. We have been drawn into a dark cloud, to fairly emerge from which may be neither an easy nor a rapid process. But when it is said and proved that these calamities have all resulted from our having set over us bad and incapable governors, there comes a gleam of light showing how the evils may be arrested: when it is added that the very men who are now angling so speciously for votes and offering such startling attractions, are they to whose incapacity and meanness the whole of the troubles are due, we have not only a key to the causes of past misfortunes, but a clear indication of how similar misfortunes may be avoided in the future.

The bad rulers who have misled and who have wrecked us, acquired their power to do so in 1880 by arts precisely similar to those which they are using in 1885. They lavished upon the electors unbounded promises of good, and by so doing acquired the power by which they have done incalculable evil. They are now trying, as it were, to hide in a blaze of fireworks the too real injuries that they have done; they are making promises so many and so brilliant that they hope the sparkling and glamour of them may wholly occupy the electors' minds, and disincline them to ask any account of how and with what results the powers which they received five years ago were exerted. They know well that there are acts of theirs—acts of shame, acts of folly, acts of meanness, acts of squandering, acts of positive

dereliction of duty—which they dare not look back on,—which they cannot justify, and for which they must not venture to make excuse; but they hope, by new promises and new blandishments, to blot out the record of their scandalous deeds.

Now it is not an unreasonable suggestion to make to the electors who are to be solicited and courted, and if possible hoodwinked, that they should not only have regard to the bill of fare which is set before them for the sweetening of the future, but that they should also inquire very persistently concerning the terrible things which the perpetrators of them seek to bury in the past. They should inquire why the country was suddenly called upon last summer to pay up eleven millions of pounds, and what equivalent it got for the money; also, how this heavy expenditure agrees with the promises of retrenchment which were made so lavishly in 1880.

They should inquire to what extent we have been taxed during the last five years.

They should ask how truly the promises of peace made at the last election were fulfilled, and how many months the country was at peace during the last five years.

It would be profitable to cast a look back to, and to ask a few questions concerning, the war on the Transvaal frontier, and the reputation with which Great Britain came out of it.

Especially would it enlighten to get a clear retrospect of the affairs of Egypt and the part which Great Britain played therein, the last months of Gordon's career, the thousands of natives that perished by British arms, the brave Britons who fell there, and how much we have profited by the events which this chapter of our history records.

Then it might edify—it certainly might be a guide in voting—to look once more at the attitude which the Ministers of the British Crown assumed in dealing with Russia concerning the north-west frontier of India last spring and summer; how far we held our own; and in what light British policy was made to appear to all the world.

If questions on these subjects cannot be answered altogether satisfactorily, the electors should pause before believing any more promises. It is an easy argument that if most alluring promises made in 1880 were followed by the very opposite of what was pledged, how can we believe that the promise-breakers, binding themselves again to-day to load us with benefits, will not once more land us in shame, misery, loss, and indignation?

Forewarned, forearmed! What

has happened before will certainly happen again, if we wilfully lay ourselves open to such sorrows. Now is the time—now, while we are as yet unpledged as to our votes—to make a careful retrospect, and consider calmly what we are about to do, turning, while we do so, steadily away from the highly coloured kaleidoscopes with which it is attempted to daze and mislead us. And let us remember that the misleading is not towards a light error, or a danger from which we can draw back again—it is towards irretrievable ruin!

For the convenience of those who are minded to retrace the career of the late Administration, we subjoin notices of a few facts brought together under general headings. They are not the half of what might be cited; and yet what a fearful indictment they undoubtedly form!

IRELAND.

While Mr Gladstone and his followers were yet conducting their election struggle in 1880, their predecessors in office made no secret of the intelligence that Ireland was once more in an alarming state, and that it would call for speedy and prompt attention from the rulers whom the constituencies might intrust with the powers of Government. The Liberal leader, however, chose to turn a deaf ear to, and even to contradict, the evidence given of the coming disturbance in a remarkable letter from the Earl of Beaconsfield to the Lord Lieutenant (Duke of Marlborough). That leader, in a speech made in Scotland, affirmed that in Ireland “there was an absence of crime and outrage, with a general sense of comfort and satisfaction, such

as was unknown in the previous history of the country.” Later on—in 1882—he acknowledged (what everybody except himself had for many months only too plainly perceived) that this affirmation had been incorrect. He had been guilty of a gross mistake as to the state of Ireland; and his Government, by consequence, made no timely provision against, and for many months refused or neglected to combat by special legislation, the treason and violence to which Ireland became a prey immediately after it took office. It is hardly necessary to recount here the Irish crimes and disorders of that unhappy period: suffice it to say that agrarian crimes—of which 67 had been committed in April—had increased in September to 167; in October the number

rose to 264, in November to 554, and in December to 866.

While this enormous progression of disorder was in course, and while the ordinary law was clearly insufficient to cope with the criminal disposition of the disaffected part of the population, and to protect life and property, the Government took no step whatever for acquiring special powers to uphold order and respect for the law—nay, they positively declined to renew the Peace Preservation Act which expired in June 1880—thus, as it were, wilfully and wantonly leaving the field clear for the enemies of the public peace. A greater or more remarkable dereliction of duty than this omission to seek powers to repress a conspiracy against the lives and liberties of her Majesty's peaceably disposed subjects, can hardly be conceived.

But though the Government were unwarrantably slow to take action against the disturbers of the public peace, they were ready enough to give them encouragement in the form of sops. A Bill was passed through the House of Commons for giving compensation (of course out of the landlords' pockets) to Irish tenants who might be evicted from their holdings. The measure was so monstrously unfair, that the Upper House rejected it by an immense majority—Liberal peers joining with Conservatives in condemning the iniquitous invention. And let us note here a blunder which was made in regard to this abortive measure. In drawing up documents to support it, the Irish officials thought it necessary to estimate the number of police in a certain part of the country. Their method of doing so was to reckon every appearance of a constable as a separate officer; so that if a policeman happened to be re-

ported on twenty occasions, he passed for twenty policemen. This (which is not a fireside story, but a fact brought to light in Parliament) shows the amount of care with which the Liberal Government examined into matters on which they founded bills of the utmost moment to the community.

An attempt was made to obtain convictions under the ordinary law against different persons who were regarded as ringleaders of the disaffected; but this, having been entered upon without sagacity, and conducted without ability or determination, utterly failed after having occupied the law courts for many days. Literally nothing effectual was done to stem the torrent of bloodshed and violence. In Britain men demanded despairingly how long the anarchy was to be permitted to last. And the year 1880, which had witnessed the accession to power of the new Ministry and their specious promises of something like a golden age, closed in deep gloom—doubt and fear having taken the places of hopes which had been unwarrantably raised.

By the time that Parliament met in the beginning of 1881, the public mind had been brought to a state of high excitement by the supineness of the Executive, which seemed absolutely helpless in presence of the bold law-breakers. An ineffectual Act was passed, for "the better Protection of Persons and Property," which enabled the Government to arrest and to cast into prison without trial persons who were known to be engaged in treasonable practices; but lest this abortive instrument should too greatly discourage the wrong-doers and the mass of the seditious, a Land Bill was introduced and carried into Act, whereby rents were arbi-

trarily reduced and tenants were presented with the right of selling their tenancies, while the landlord was strictly restrained as to removing old tenants or refusing to receive new ones who might obtrude themselves on him by purchase. The effect of this most unjust measure was to impoverish, and in many cases to ruin, the owners of land; to render land itself unsaleable; to embitter class grudges; to scare capital; to repress industry; and *not in the slightest degree to abate the disaffection, discontent, and disobedience to the laws.*

The Protection of Persons, &c., Act was proclaimed by the Prime Minister at the London Guildhall in the autumn of 1881, as an engine of wondrous potency with which he would crush out the power of the Irish Land League. Alas! the Irish Land League only waxed stronger under its operation, and seemed likely to crush him and his feeble Administration. The Government with an appearance of great vigour imprisoned leader after leader, Mr Parnell himself being one of the incarcerated; but the prisoners from their cells were able to checkmate it. For the miserable law which could arrest the persons of the conspirators, did not sever their correspondence with the outside world. Full power was left them to agitate by letter; and they did not fail to work upon the minds of their followers with such effect that a refusal to pay rent at all was announced from all the centres of disaffection as a line of action for the whole country. While all intelligent men trembled to think of the calamities to which this might lead, and wondered how the Ministry would act in face of so serious a danger, lo! it was discovered in the spring of 1882 that a treaty had actually been arranged between

the baffled rulers and the traitors whom they had shut up in jail—a covenant held up to ridicule and contempt as the “Treaty of Kilmainham.” The boasted Land Act, the belauded “Protection” Act, had effected nothing towards the pacifying of Ireland; but rather therebels, by increasing their transgressions, had won a victory and brought the Executive to terms. All was suddenly changed now. The late captives, released from durance, recommenced the work of agitation and disturbance, while nominally they undertook to lend some support to the measures of Government, as the price of their deliverance from prison.

A severe beating in the field would scarcely have warranted the humiliating course to which the Ministers resorted, far less was it excused by the clever strokes which, through their incapacity and want of foresight, the enemy was enabled to deliver. All, even of their own party, would not endure the degradation which they had brought on themselves. The Duke of Argyll left the Cabinet in 1881; now, on the discovery of the treaty with “men steeped to the lips in treason,” Mr Forster, the Irish Secretary, resigned and washed his hands of a degrading connection; Lord Cowper, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, resigned also.

The discomfiture of the pretentious Ministry was grievous; but, ere the public mind had time to appreciate the disgrace of the situation, another blow was delivered by the opponents of the law, more paralysing than former crimes, because it was struck at officials in the service of the Crown, but not more atrocious than many crimes which had gone before it. The new Irish Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his Under-Secretary, Mr Burke, were both

assassinated, in open daylight, in the Phoenix Park. It was only one more in a series of atrocities, but the audacity of it seemed to indicate that the disaffected had lost all dread of the law; and the United Kingdom, shocked and scandalised, peremptorily demanded a real and effectual Act for the preservation of the peace in Ireland. The result was that the Ministry was compelled at length to pass the forcible Coercion Act of 1882, by which very large powers were given for the repression of crime, and by virtue of which murder and outrage were at length successfully dealt with, so that the commission of these offences was far less frequent than before, and, month by month, the numbers of them diminished.

But so many blunders had not been committed, so long a period of feeble and injurious government had not passed away, without reducing unhappy Ireland to the lowest depths of distraction, poverty, and adversity. The country was in effect ruined. The success of the nefarious designs of conspirators and secret societies, jeopardised every prop of order, every source of wellbeing; the cowardice, baseness, and incapacity of the Government set the seal to the general destruction.

The dealings of the Gladstone Administration with Ireland, ig-

noble and unbecoming as they were, failed to effect even the slightest amelioration of the feeling with which Ireland regarded and regards Great Britain. So far is Ireland from being satisfied, or even in the least degree propitiated, that she is more vindictive and more exacting than before these wonderful dealings took place. Total separation from us is now her cry. Undoubtedly such separation has been brought within the range of practical politics. That it has been so brought is due entirely to the mismanagement of the late Administration. An Administration composed of the members who lately held office under Mr Gladstone would assuredly—though they may not intend to do so, and though they proclaim the contrary—so misdirect affairs as to bring about this most dangerous separation. They would yield to importunity and tactics. It is only by recording the decree of the country against such an Administration at the forthcoming election that this catastrophe can be averted.

If there were no other test by which to try them, the blundering and ignorance which, when in office, they showed by their treatment of Irish questions, would alone be sufficient cause why they should not again be intrusted with the direction of affairs.

FOREIGN POLICY.

To look at the manner in which they handled foreign affairs is only to find another potent reason why it would be suicidal at this juncture to give them power. Their whole administration, as regarded other States, was marked by something not far removed from fatuity. If they had gone to work with the

express intention of degrading, dismembering, and impoverishing the British empire, they could not have achieved these evils more effectually than they have done. It seemed as if fate had determined to brand their foreign policy with stultification even before their official career began. A foremost act

of theirs, if not their very first act, was an apology by Mr Gladstone to Austria for injurious and abusive language which he had chosen to use concerning her in the course of his election campaign. He was embroiled before he had taken the oaths of office; his first act was a surrender and an *amende*; and it was a fair sample of what his dealings with other nations would be throughout his inglorious career. Folly and presumption are often found in the same person. The man who had stumbled so heavily at the opening of his official term, was vain enough to think that he could initiate and establish a great harmony among the Western Powers, which, with fond anticipation, he named "the Concert of Europe." This concert was something like the tower whose top would reach to heaven—it could never labour into being, and it ended in utter confusion. After five years of wrangling and decline it was found that the British empire, in its need, had not one friendly Power to which it could look for countenance. The ambitious concert-makers had estranged it from the whole world; not, however, by the kind of arrogance or by the grabbing practice by which Ministries have ere now made themselves detested, but by the tactics of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, by "booing." Our power, our credit, our possessions, were "booed" away, and we got nothing but kicks in exchange.

It was the aim of the Whig-Radical Government to propitiate France and to be confederate with her, but the skill to win France to our side was lamentably wanting. Not that we did not sacrifice enough. We made shipwreck of our interests in the Suez Canal and in Egypt generally; we con-
nived at something very like brig-

andage in Tunis; we gave but a half-hearted support to, and obtained but a sorry compensation for, an English missionary who had been vilely insulted and injured by a French admiral in Madagascar. By mismanagement of a convention we allowed Egypt to come close to bankruptcy. But, for all our silly and costly complaisance, no nation showed herself in this year of grace 1885 more ready to embarrass us, to speak ill of us, or to smile at the troubles which bad government had brought on us, than France.

Our humiliation in South Africa, though it began only four years ago, has been followed by so many more indignities and disasters which have in turn engrossed the public mind, that to revert to it now is like turning to a legend of old days. Yet it was the Ministry which went out of office only in last summer which subjected the country to that disgrace—the greatest, probably, which a British Government has by choice undergone since the days of Charles II. We accepted a beating from a handful of semi-barbarous settlers; we condoned the murder of many of our troops; we gave up a territory which we had solemnly annexed, and of which a British General had been permitted to say to the inhabitants, that the rivers would flow back from the sea to their sources before Great Britain would relax her grasp of it; worse than all this, we deserted the savage tribes who had shown us friendship and given us assistance, and left them to be punished and enslaved by the bold freebooters whom we had not the spirit to conquer. The convention which we made with our victorious foes was broken by them openly and boastfully within a few months of its ratification; our nation was

defied and reviled, not by irresponsible or obscure railers, but by the representatives of the tribes—by all they had to show for a National Assembly and a Government; yet the Boers tired of insulting before we tired of submitting to insult. The Prime Minister, to sanctify the cowardice and recreancy, accused the nation of blood-guiltiness (not foreseeing what the career of his own Cabinet was about to be in respect of blood), and affected to regard us as doing penance for sins and iniquities committed under his predecessor. This is a miserable chapter in our history: there is not a redeeming circumstance about it; its stain has never been wiped out. The men who dragged us into this slough have now the assurance to ask us to trust them again with the reins of Government.

The miscarriage next in time to the South African, was the Egyptian, another foul blot on the statesmanship and the honour of Great Britain. In the year 1882 affairs of State in Egypt, which had been much unsettled for some months, assumed so untoward a phase as to threaten anarchy on the banks of the Nile, and much embarrassment to us, who, as the rulers of India, are deeply interested in the neutrality of the Suez Canal. We had, in the year 1879, assumed, in conjunction with France, what was called the "dual control" of Egypt—a supervising power which gave the right to intervene when the peace of that country might be seriously threatened. A decided announcement, made by us in good time, would, as was thought by careful observers, have at once put an end to disturbance and maintained the Khedive's authority. But, unhappily, it was always the fate of the Gladstone Administration to

act undecidedly, and to be "too late" to achieve any good result by the action which at length they took. Their doings in Egypt in 1882, 1883, 1884, and 1885 are sad examples of this.

They allowed Arabi, the rebellious pacha, to grow strong before they opposed him. Then they sought to intimidate him by parading the British fleet in the harbour of Alexandria. The demonstration did not dispirit the Egyptian leader, who speedily armed and manned his forts. It, however, provoked a serious riot in Alexandria, in which many Europeans were killed and the British Consul wounded: a great panic followed this.

In July our Cabinet made up its mind to do something, though it could not muster resolution to take boldly all the measures which the occasion required. It sanctioned the bombardment of the forts at Alexandria by the British fleet; and this service was resolutely carried out, the only result of it being that the town, during the confusion that it caused, was burned and pillaged by rebels within. A force of marines, somewhat over 1000 strong, was landed from the fleet to protect property if possible; but the *corps d'armées* which should have been in readiness to operate on shore and complete Arabi's overthrow after the bombardment, was not forthcoming; and the rebel leader remained supreme, strengthened himself, and increased the confusion by threatening the town from the land side. The terror and loss of property at this time were dreadful. European women, in distraction, fled, offering their jewels and trinkets for passages to lands where they could be secure. The scandalous state of things was entirely due to naval action having been ordered without provision

having been made for following it up by the operation of troops on shore. The late Ministry is responsible for such horrors having occurred.

At length, public indignation having been strongly aroused by the half-measures which had been resorted to with so much destruction and so little real success, the unready Ministry were compelled to take, at great expense, the steps which led to the battle of Tel-el-Kebir and the capture of Arabi. One-half of the force which was sent out under Sir Garnet Wolseley in 1882, if sent only a few weeks earlier—that is to say, so as to be there when the bombardment took place—would have averted many horrors, and would have brought about at the end of the campaign a more satisfactory state of things than that which actually resulted.

After Tel-el-Kebir followed the contemptible shuffling with regard to Egypt which the British Ministry maintained for a twelvemonth or thereabouts. They declared that they were about to establish good and stable native government in that country immediately, and then to withdraw our troops, which declaration observant people saw to be mere pretence and folly. And they pretended (although the contrary was patent) that not they but a *bonâ fide* Government at Cairo was ruling Egypt. Meanwhile the finances of that country were falling into lamentable disorder. At the end of the year 1883 the unfortunate expedition of Hicks Pacha for the relief of certain posts held by Egyptian troops in the Soudan took place. Hicks and his whole army were destroyed. The Mahdi and his general, Osman Digna, held unmoled sway in the Soudan; the fall and massacre of the beleaguered Egyptian garrisons seemed inevit-

able; this country justly cast the blame of the shocking situation on our Government; and the embarrassment of these miserable protectors and supervisors (or, as they styled themselves, advisers) of the Government of Egypt was extreme. In their impotence and distress they were compelled to do something to appease the anger of Parliament, which was about to assemble; and they devised a scheme for putting off the evil day—the very wildest, probably, which has found acceptance with a Council of State since the dark ages. The chivalrous Gordon, often successful in combating oriental difficulties, held a high place in the public mind; and the wretched Cabinet imagined that it might use him for its occasions, and conjure with his name so as to turn away indignation from itself. He had undertaken a different mission in the service of a foreign sovereign; but this Ministers made him forego, in order that he might start off almost alone into the heart of the Soudan to do what armies had failed to do. Unexampled absurdity! fatuity which posterity will pronounce incredible!

Gordon was not the man to inquire into the prudence or reasonableness of a service of danger in which he was required to take the foremost part. It was sufficient for him that a call was made upon him by his country. He went, did his best, was left unsupported, and perished like a hero. His sad story is too fresh in the minds of us all to need repetition here. But can we ever forgive the ridiculous folly which sent him forth, or the time-serving, selfish recreancy of those who, having put him in jeopardy to save themselves, now left him to die rather than incur the responsibility of moving to his rescue?

Gordon's story is by far the greatest, but is by no means the only blot in the Egyptian affairs which date after Hicks Pacha's destruction. While Gordon lived, Sinkat fell; and its garrison was massacred. Tokar also had to surrender. But a useless English force, under General Graham, advanced from Suakim into the desert, fought most gallantly with the Mahdi's troops, who were equally brave, slaughtered them by thousands, and then withdrew from the theatre of war, having accomplished literally nothing towards the pacification of Egypt. The Government evidently had no plan, or, if they had one, had not constancy or courage to carry it out. Blood and treasure were squandered profusely; but not the slightest advantage had they to show for this grievous expenditure.

In the autumn of 1884, as must be in the recollection of most of us, Lord Wolseley proceeded once more to Egypt, and made the attempt to reach Khartoum by the Nile—an attempt which could not be carried out in time to save Gordon (the Gladstone Government was always too late when it had the determination to act at all), and which cost an immense sum of money. The lives of Generals Earle and Stewart, and those of many other brave men, were sacrificed to no purpose. When the dire news of Gordon's death, at a time when succour was so near him, reached his countrymen, the terrified Ministers, whatever they may have felt, were obliged to manifest some disposition to avenge his loss. They sent General Graham back to Egypt; they gave him a fresh army; they undertook to make a railway from Suakim to Berber; they were determined to "smash the Mahdi"; their souls were on fire—or they would have

had us believe that they were so. But alas! the enthusiasm of such fickle governors soon cooled down to the old frigid *insouciance*. The war was not prosecuted with any vigour; the costly railway, after having been begun, was abandoned, and such parts of it as had been laid were left as a spoil for the Mahdi's people; finally, where all had been enthusiasm and warlike ardour, all suddenly became irresolution and panic; a general "scuttle" ended the expedition which had commenced with such a flourish of trumpets; and poor John Bull, whose every desire and honourable intention had been foiled, was left to pay the heavy bill, and to pocket the disgrace. Millions of money had been wasted in the Soudan, we had lavishly expended our own flesh and blood, and we had slaughtered the Mahdi's men literally by thousands!

This Egyptian chapter is truly a fearful witness against the Gladstone Government. If there were no other charge, it would prove them unfit to be ever trusted again with power.

We have not failed to observe how Mr John Morley, an indefatigable pleader for another Liberal Ministry, has been obliged to confess that the enterprises of the late Liberal Ministry in the Soudan were "a hideous error." They were so, no doubt; but how can Mr Morley urge the British people to call back to power the blood-guilty men who committed them? If Mr Morley wants a repetition of such crime and folly, the nation does not. He (Mr M.) says that the late Ministers were hounded on to their "hideous error" by the Tories. If this were true, it would be no better apology than that of the schoolboy who stole apples because "Jones told him to." But it is not true. Mr Gladstone's

Government had an overwhelming majority, which they used unblushingly, never losing an opportunity of showing their contempt for Tory policy and Tory advice. What the Tories, not as a party, but in common with many shocked and restive Liberals, urged upon the late Government with regard to Egypt was, to act boldly and vigorously like men, not to vacillate and flinch and scuttle after having taken a resolution. If the Tories now blame the Liberals for their dealings with Egypt, it is not because those dealings were undertaken, but because they were half-hearted, insincere, and without result.

But with the fearful roll of Egyptian folly their shame and incapacity do not end. Into those five years of office they managed to compress more blunders than a succession of ordinary Cabinets commit in half a century. To the last day of their official existence they went wrong, and they ended with a breakdown which not Britain only but all Europe might have been by this time punished for by bloody and general war, had they not providentially been deposed from power ere they put the last fell stroke to their insane and destructive policy.

It has been said that the incapacity, mismanagement, and vain self-confidence of the Gladstone Government reduced Great Britain to the pitiable condition of not having a friend among all the Powers of the earth. While such was Britain's forlorn plight, Russia thought she saw an opportunity of threatening with impunity the north-west frontier of our Indian empire; and she accordingly raised an alarm there, which has only recently, through the able action of Lord Salisbury, subsided. It were needless for us here to recount all

the events and circumstances of that most ignominious passage of our history, for our breasts are thrilling with them still. The pressure of Russia upon the Afghans; her insolent delay to send up her commissioners of demarcation to meet the British commissioners who waited for them; her unwarrantable advance and seizure of an Afghan post during a state of peace; her advancement of fresh claims to more and more of Afghan territory; the swaggering demeanour of her soldiers and officials, which our Government had not the courage or resolution to check,—are they not written upon all our hearts?

But, however insolently and unjustly our adversary behaved, the shame and sting which have been left to us are due entirely to the cowardly and incapable manner in which our cause was betrayed by our own Government. They it was who, by terror, indecision, and meanness, suffered our rights to be trampled upon, our honour to be sullied, our ally to be insulted and robbed. Not only did we suffer in our honour; we were placed in such a position that, but for the resignation of our purblind Cabinet, we must have been plunged into a long, bloody, and perhaps ruinous war. As it was, we had to incur the expense of preparing for war.

The excuse cannot even be made for our helpless rulers that the action of Russia took them by surprise, and therefore at disadvantage. For, as in the case of Ireland, they were fully warned of what might be expected, and they refused to listen to the warning. Their predecessors, quite alive to the danger which threatened, took order six years ago for the security of the north-west frontier of India. They occupied Candahar with Brit-

ish troops, and they commenced a railway communication from British territory towards that station. It seems like the most wanton perversity, but it is a fact, that the Gladstone Cabinet, on taking office, destroyed the railway, sold the materials, and withdrew our troops from Candahar, the station whence they might, on alarm, have advanced to the defence of Herat. It was, therefore, no want of warning, but an obstinate wilfulness to walk in the wrong way, which laid us open to the machinations of Russia, and brought our present shame upon us. Had the prudent

and statesmanlike plans of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet been proceeded with, our frontier would by this time have been perfectly safe, and no molestation from Russia need have been dreaded or expected.

This gross neglect of our defences, and this more recent misconduct of our affairs, form two more heavy counts in the indictment against the Whig-Radical Administration, and are warnings to our electors not, on pain of most serious foreign complications, to again intrust British interests to incompetent hands.

WAR.

After hearing or reading the speeches of the Whig-Radical party, and especially those of the leader of that party, previous to the last general election, a person might fairly have expected that their term of office which followed the election would be a time of peace. But, as we have just been showing, the sword was drawn immediately after the late Government acceded to power, and was never again sheathed during their rule; for our troops, if not continually campaigning, were in occupation of a land not ours. Of all our wars and quarrels in this period, the Transvaal war is the only one forced upon us, and the only one which we were bound to embark in and to follow up to a successful issue. Yet this is the one war of those conducted by the late Ministry which they would not prosecute. Where the necessity for war was doubtful, they kept hostilities dragging on; where we were clearly bound to repel an impudent invasion, and to avenge a defeat, we receded and made an ignominious peace. In speaking

of the necessity for war as having been in some cases doubtful, we do not mean that our cause was bad, but we mean that by firm and bold conduct our Ministers might have gained all they wanted without crossing swords at all. It was morbid timidity about going to war which brought war upon us. Firm language from us at the beginning of Arabi's rebellion would have brought him to submission: it was timidity and vacillation that drew him on to acts of usurpation and hostility, from which he could not retreat without fighting. In respect to the dispute with Russia, a similar remark may be made. It became formidable because Russia was not met by a firm front in the first instance. The weakness and indecision of our Government offered the opportunity for those *courses* of deceit and aggression which are characteristic of Russian policy. We were brought to the very brink of a war, from which the nation could not afterwards have withdrawn, simply because our Ministers were wholly incap-

able of dealing satisfactorily with foreign affairs.

The fearful and immense slaughter is a feature to be noted in Mr Gladstone's Soudan wars. The useless bloodshed reads as if it had been designed by some malignant spirit. And yet the author of it is the same man who charged with blood-guiltiness Ministers who, in a better cause, had been infinitely less destructive than he himself afterwards became. In a better cause, we say—for the Egyptian Government, prompted by the British Ministry, had declared the Soudan to be beyond Egyptian limits. The Mahdi's men, therefore, who fought in that region,

were not rebels. *We* were invaders of their country, which they surely had a right to defend. The only excuse for our being in the Soudan was, that we were there to rescue the Egyptian garrisons; but we did *not* rescue the garrisons, and the slaughter was to no purpose.

The experience of the last five years shows that, if the result of the general election should be the restoration of power to Mr Gladstone and his party, the country must endure a state of continual warfare and quarrelling, proceeding not from pugnacity or arrogance, but from ignorance and incapacity.

FINANCE.

Since the late Ministry took office the prosperity of the country has seriously decreased, while the burdens have been as seriously augmented. Its mere formation, before it had time to make its action manifest in public affairs, alarmed capitalists and discouraged enterprise; during the whole period of its duration business languished, and the general condition of trade grew worse and worse. From the date of their advent to power, Mr Gladstone and his colleagues increased the national expenditure. Putting aside, for the moment, the enormous charges of this present year, and reckoning only to the completion of the year 1883-84, it appears from official documents that there was an average increase of annual expenditure amounting to £1,200,000, which, in the four years 1880-81 to 1883-84, reaches the sum of £4,800,000 in imperial taxation alone. A large proportion of this increase is in civil charges, which form £2,985,000 of the foregoing sum; and the cost of

collecting the revenue has been another rapidly growing item. Proceeding now to the accounts of the year 1884-85, we find the gross expenditure to have been estimated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in November 1884, at £89,169,000, which will probably be under the actual expenditure. Now the average gross expenditure of the four preceding years had been £85,558,000, so that here is an excess of nearly £4,000,000 on that average.

All this extravagance will be thrown into the shade when the figures for 1885-86 may be published; but let us glance for a moment at the taxation that we have endured under a Ministry of retrenchment. One of its very first acts was to increase the income-tax from 5d. to 6d. in the pound; in 1881-82 the rate returned to 5d., but was again increased in 1882-83 to 6½d.; in 1883-84 it stood at 5d., but was increased in 1884-85 to 6d., and in 1885-86 to 8d. The lamentable state of things has necessarily

operated to the very great depression of our working classes, numbers of whom are altogether thrown out of work, while others are working on greatly decreased wages. Land has been falling in value in Great Britain during the same period—a misfortune due in part, if not wholly, to the unwise attitude of the Cabinet towards landowners, and to the encouragement by members of the Government of unjust, arbitrary, and ruinous designs against them. So vast a property as the land of the whole island cannot suffer depreciation without large numbers of the lower orders, who live by the land, being reduced to poverty and want. They cannot do a more foolish and suicidal thing than to call back to power men who have so injured business and burdened the country. The Gladstone Ministry—the Ministry of retrenchment and peace—took, in the past summer, a vote of credit for eleven millions of money to defray the expenses of their wars in Egypt, and the preparation for wars caused by their fault, arising out of the wrangle with Russia about the Afghan frontier. If the working people of the land wish to avoid such paralyzing burdens as this upon the earnings of the country, they must make their stand now and refuse their votes to the authors of such expenditure—of such wasteful expenditure, we may say, for Britain

has not seen, and never will see, the return of a penny of the enormous outlay. She is impoverished not only by the cost, but by the deteriorated state of things which the cost has brought about. Nations which have suffered material loss all round have been known to console themselves by the reflection that they have not lost honour: we can lay no such flattering unction to our soul, for of all our cherished possessions our honour has suffered the most.

It is a fashion with Liberals to represent all profuse public outlay as a sin of the Tories. We hope that no man who may be called on to give his vote this year will forget that the lavish expenditure which we have to find means for, is *not* due to the Tories; that the Tories have not for many a year past, and are not likely for many a year to come, to make away with eleven millions for which no equivalent can be shown; that times are very hard at present, and that we really cannot afford to pay at this rate for the vagaries of Mr Gladstone and his political associates. Voters should remember, too, that the Ministers who wasted money so freely by the million, had, in the year 1883, accepted Mr Rylands's motion that it was necessary to *reduce* the national expenditure. Their mode of reducing it was to raise the annual expenditure to £100,000,000!

PROMISES OF WOULD-BE MINISTERS.

We have been favoured this autumn with a manifesto from Mr Gladstone, concerning which we remark that it is more like a legacy or a deathbed charge than like the bid of a candidate for office. It is distinguished from former election addresses from the

same source by being void of decoys and bribes, and by the absence from it of bitterness and malice. Those whose memories can go back eleven years may recall how in 1874 Mr Gladstone offered to do away with the income-tax and to remodel our system of

taxation. They who are mindful of the last five years may refer to the denunciations of 1880, the wickedness at that time so censoriously imputed to the Tories, and, above all, to the bitterness of expression, the envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, by which his speeches in Mid-Lothian were characterised. The document of 1885 is moderate in tone and very vague in many of its declarations. No doubt it has been framed in the manner most likely, in its author's opinion, to obtain favour for his party among the electors. But why moderation and obscurity should be the qualities to win with now, instead of the reckless wholesale accusations and the Utopian pictures so successful in 1880, is not easy to divine. It may be (and we should rejoice if such were the case) that the experienced demagogue has a painful consciousness—1st, that the game of making lavish promises and of prophesying smooth things, though it attained a brilliant success of the moment, yet has proved most damaging in the long-run (inasmuch as the promises have not been kept, and the halcyon days have not come about), and a repetition of such lures might provoke awkward retorts and sceptical observations from the voters; 2d, that the railing accusations would hardly bear to be repeated from the lips of one who has for five years been rendering himself guilty of all the charges which he so falsely and cruelly showered on his opponents—blood-guiltiness, extravagance, injustice, and so forth. If this be so, and if the late Premier thinks that the nation will forget his former utterances and his shortcomings so long as he does not himself bring them to mind—if he flatters himself that it will be content to take him now, posing as the calm, speculative,

philosophic statesman—he is laying up much disappointment for himself. The mere fact that he desires to turn away the public mind from the recent part of his career shows a weakness in his case; and we trust that it will be duly noted.

But there are some who say that the manifesto has been drawn up with the object of turning aside the only danger which can possibly threaten the Liberal party—namely, disunion. "Liberal principles," say these judges, "are so thoroughly approved by the great mass of the people, that injury to its interests can come only from within the party itself. Its wings have already withdrawn widely from each other; actual disruption may ensue, and give to the enemy that advantage which he could never obtain from any merit of his own." To those who hold these opinions Mr Gladstone's cautious production appears to be exactly what the occasion demanded. It furnishes a temperate, an almost featureless programme, which does not condemn or discountenance the most heroic reformers, while it offers no strong meat to give nightmares to the mildest toyer with Liberalism. The party is to echo with one voice—at any rate until after the election—the platitudes and ambiguities which the authoritative mind has prepared for them; they are to sink all differences, to think only of routing the common enemy, to shout for the true faith as propounded by their prophet, and to go in and win with a mighty down-treading of the foe.

All Mr Gladstone's utterances are put forth as those of a successful statesman—the little confessions of error reading like graceful avowals which the triumphant can afford to make without damage to reputation. There may be circum-

stances in which a man's best chance lies in begging the question of his merit and sufficiency—in not supposing it possible that these can be disputed. Assemblies or communities are, no doubt, often ready to take a man at the value which he puts upon himself. But this is generally when defects or failures have faded by lapse of time, or when some brilliant feat has just disposed men to look only on the favourable side. But when a man, in full view of the public, has been continuously tripping and doubling for five years, and his last stumble, not six months old, has been his worst, the cool impudence of ignoring a large volume of convictions is scarcely good policy. Men of any intelligence are apt to feel insulted and angry when a "tine-man"¹ in government and affairs comes before them as an Admirable Crichton. The alarm and anger caused by Mr Gladstone's Russian miscarriage have not ceased to afflict John Bull's mind; and will John endure that a person who has just "given him such a turn" shall approach him as a guide, philosopher, and friend, with "Peace be to this house"? No; we are convinced that the trick, though a bold one, will not succeed; that there will be a raking up of some incidents in our history of remarkably *mauvaise odeur*; and that the broken politician in the garb of a prophet will fare as did that audacious Bohemian who presented himself before Louis XI. and Charles of Burgundy clad in a herald's coat.

If the leader's address be bare of promises, the same cannot be said of those of his followers. The late President of the Board of Trade has, in especial manner, distinguished himself by the great ideas which he has presented to the new electors; we say to the *new*—because some of these ideas are so archaic, and have been rejected as hopeless by so many ages, that they can be refurbished to-day only to suit intelligences for which the exhibitor feels supreme contempt. "Ho! every one that is poor," says Mr Chamberlain, "come to me and I will make you rich, if only you trust me with your votes. You shall be made rich by Act of Parliament at the expense of the bloated capitalists who rouse every day your envy and indignation."² This is a sufficiently tempting invitation to panting poverty. Dives knows that it is all humbug, but Lazarus does not: Lazarus knows his vote is as good as the vote of Dives, and for every Dives there are a thousand Lazaruses. Putting morality aside, therefore, Mr Chamberlain is wise in his generation, though it has yet to be proved whether or not he may be wiser than the children of light. For there is by this time a good deal of light in the world, and sooner or later the light will shine on the dark intellects. Yet it makes a considerable difference to Mr Chamberlain which of the words "sooner" or "later" may suit the real event. If *sooner* has it, the affidavit-monger will fall into the pit which he digged before

¹ For the benefit of our Southern readers we explain that a *tine-man* is one who *tines*, i.e., loses or comes to grief in most, or all, of his undertakings.

² The subjoined extract affords proof that the prophetic afflatus was as strong on the banks of Avon as by the river of Chebar or the river of Ulai:—

"Gadshill. What, ho! chamberlain!

Chamberlain [within]. At hand, quoth pick-purse.

Gadshill. That's even as fair as—at hand, quoth the chamberlain: for thou variest no more from picking of purses, than giving direction doth from labouring; thou lay'st the plot how."

—First Part of King Henry IV., Act II. scene I.

others; if *later*, he may flourish like a green bay-tree for a season, only to be confounded at the last.

For in these days Dives enjoys indifferent good means of making his voice heard. He will communicate with Lazarus through other tongues than those of his dogs, and he may possibly dissuade him from making a fool of himself. But should the inflamed appetite be too strongly set upon a premature Abraham's bosom on this side of the gulf to listen to expostulation, still the beggar will be converted, as has been the case in former ages, by the whirligig of time. He will discover that the plundering of the rich is not a simple operation to be quietly and completely consummated by Mr Chamberlain's "*Presto, pass!*" but that it will set in motion numerous wheels hitherto supposed to be unconnected with this business, and raise a whirlamid which the money, the cause of all the hubbub, will itself disappear. Capital will stand a long siege; but, while the siege is in progress, many a workman will have to accept reduced wages, and many a one will be drafted into the ranks of the unemployed. The rich, though they may suffer, will certainly not suffer alone. While they are being dragged down enterprise will be paralysed; the mere threat of dragging them down has already paralysed enterprise, as is apparent from the restricted state of business and the plethora of unemployed money. Without doubt, confiscatory measures, sanctioned by Parliament, will so discourage employment of capital as to depress wages and to throw large numbers of artisans and labourers out of work. Without doubt, also, the population of these islands will go on increasing. Now, if we put these two things together—viz., a decrease in the earnings

of the whole community and an increase in the number of mouths, we shall see that very widespread misery among the industrial classes will probably result if Mr Chamberlain's schemes should be realised. The plunder of the rich will go but a small way to alleviate this misery, even at its beginning, because the poor and needy are so many in comparison of the wealthy, that the spoil, when distributed, will yield but a small gain to each individual. And in the long-run, the plunder of the national wealth must result in national ruin. We therefore counsel, we entreat, our fellow-countrymen of the working classes who have got votes to give, not to give them in aid of Mr Chamberlain's dangerous schemes. Mr Gladstone himself has not ventured to stamp those schemes with his approval; and when he, situated as we know him to be, feels bound to discountenance the raid, we may feel sure that he anticipates from it, if it should be adopted, damage—speedy damage—to the authors and the instruments of it.

We should like the younger electors who may be at all dazzled by Mr Chamberlain's brilliant promises, to inquire of those of their class who can recollect the Reform Act of 1832, what the Liberal promises were which preceded the passing of that Act, and to what extent those promises were fulfilled. We know that the disappointment which followed the passing of that Act was bitter. Let the elector depend upon this, that the promises of solid gain to the labouring man, now put forth by Mr Chamberlain, will no more be fulfilled than were the promises of peace and retrenchment made by Liberals at the general election of 1880. Our artisans and labourers will not prosper until the

manufactures and trade of the country shall prosper; and there will be no efficient impulse given to our business or our commerce until a Government shall be firmly

seated, which may appreciate the importance of giving security to property, and will do its best to foster our industries and to increase our markets.

INCIDENTS AT HOME.

The public is aware, no doubt, that Mr Bradlaugh, although he was many times sent to Parliament by the electors of Northampton, has never been allowed by the House of Commons to take his seat. He has sought to do so, using many arguments and devices, but has never been able to overcome the repugnance which the members feel to his blasphemies and his character. Now Mr Gladstone might have been expected, before all other men, to have been prominent in effecting the suppression of Mr Bradlaugh and all his works. Yet, difficult as such conduct may be to reconcile with his professions, Mr Gladstone has been the persistent advocate of Mr Bradlaugh's claim to take his seat. He has thrown to the winds all the religious and moral obligations by which the majority of the House felt itself to be bound, and has posed as the champion of the atheist and blasphemers.

Mr Gladstone's utter heartlessness towards Gordon, whom he sacrificed, has excited just indignation far and near. Men of all ranks, whether they approved of the manner in which Gordon was latterly employed or not, yet could not but admire his self-devotion, and were moved to generous sorrow by his tragical death. Mr Gladstone, alone almost, was callous and unfeeling after the sad capture of Khartoum. A tool of his had broken in the using—that was all; and was he to waste his time and his breath in lamentations and

sighs? No, truly; he would get other tools: such people were only counters, and they and theirs must accept resignedly whatever dispensation might reach them in the course of a hazardous career.

It is a just and serious complaint against the late Prime Minister, that in the wordy warfare of which he is so fond he is apt to overstep the bounds which separate truth from untruth. When convicted of transgressing in this way, he generally tries to wriggle out of his confusion by putting a strained meaning on words. But even this shift will not always serve him; for he can commit himself grossly to a positive announcement of what is not the fact, as was the case when he attributed to the Marquis of Salisbury words about "a rope round his neck," which the Marquis had never used; and when he announced to the House of Commons that Russia had made an engagement with regard to the Afghan boundary, which it afterwards turned out that she never had made. A statesman forfeits all claim to support when he can stoop thus to tamper with the truth in order to damage an opponent or to get himself out of a difficulty.

The unworthy manner in which Mr Gladstone will treat deserving public servants is another habit which goes to increase his discredit. Reference has already been made to the worst instance of this—the inhuman treatment of Gordon; but his behaviour to Sir Peter Lumsden, last summer, is

another grave error. All zeal for the public service must die out if good and devoted officials are treated with indignity.

We know not whether Mr Bright may propose to form one of the new Liberal Cabinet in case of his party returning to office; but it is possible that such may be his plan. His countrymen should never forget the contemptible figure which he made a twelvemonth since when endeavouring to free himself from a distinct and sweeping rule of conduct which he had laid down when such a rule suited the requirements of his party. He had said, "Repudiate without mercy any bill of any Government, whatever its franchise, whatever its seeming concessions may be, if it does not redistribute the seats. The question of redistribution is the very soul of the question." But when it came to pass that this advice was at variance with the tactics which his party at a certain conjuncture was following, he was eager to slip away from the maxim to which his own words so absolutely bound him. And it was not easy to elude such unlimited and uncompromising sentences; nevertheless, he was ready to face about at the call of party, and to declare that his words were intended to apply to a particular occasion only. It is diffi-

cult to conceive how the words "any bill of any Government" can be narrowed to a particular instance.

The conduct of Mr Chamberlain in respect to the shameful outrages known as the "Aston Riots," ought to give the labouring classes, for whose votes he is angling, some idea of the unscrupulous expedients to which he will resort when he may have a purpose to serve. The story is barely a year old, and a reminder of the heads of it will be all that is here necessary. A Conservative gathering, held at Aston, near Birmingham, in the autumn of 1884, was invaded, attacked, and stopped by roughs. Mr Chamberlain was strongly suspected of having favoured this violence, and he was so pointedly attacked as having done so in the House of Commons, that he was compelled to speak in his own defence. In the course of his oration, he produced numerous affidavits, sworn at Birmingham or in the neighbourhood, and supporting his version of the cause and course of the riots. Subsequently it appeared that these affidavits, on which his defence had rested, were utterly unworthy of credit. He had therefore escaped censure through perjury.

These are little matters for the electors to recollect when the actors of them may come to solicit the people's confidence.

MERITS AND DEMERITS OF THE LATE GOVERNMENT.

We proceed to sum, in brief, the arguments for and against acquittal, taking, first, all we can find to say in favour—viz.:

1. Effect given to one or two provisions of the Berlin Treaty.
2. The Employers' Liability Act.
3. A Bankruptcy Act.
4. The Franchise and Redistribution Acts.

5. Two different revisions of the Procedure of the House of Commons, which, to judge from the complaints now made by the author of them, were very incomplete and unsatisfactory changes.

And then comes the very serious list of errors—viz.:

1. Ireland impoverished, its people alienated, its landlords

mulcted and ruined, arbitrary measures legalised.

2. The Transvaal given up to the Boers under a convention which they immediately broke, but which they were allowed peaceably to repeat, notwithstanding their breach of faith. Beating of British troops in the field submitted to. Murder of British soldiers condoned. Native allies of Great Britain shamefully deserted and left to the mercy of the Boers.

3. Wars in Egypt, bombardment of Alexandria, suppression of Arabi, resulting only in increased confusion. Soudan war, enormous slaughter of natives, followed by withdrawal without any object for which Britain fought being attained. Absurd Gordon expedition. Abandonment, in the first instance, of Gordon and of the garrisons. Then, too late, another Soudan expedition; more slaughter of natives; commencement of a railway, which was afterwards abandoned; general scuttle, with Gordon murdered, and the objects for which he struggled unaccomplished.

4. Egyptian finance complicated, and a *quasi* bankruptcy produced purely through mismanagement and procrastination. Negotiations concerning a parallel water-way in Egypt mismanaged, and the proposed agreement with M. de Lesseps finally abandoned.

5. Defence of our Indian north-west frontier wantonly neglected in 1880. Troops withdrawn from Candahar. The railway stopped. Way left open to a pushing and treacherous enemy, notwithstanding that warning after warning was given of what might be expected.

6. When at last Russia advanced as it had been foreseen that she would, British Ministers submitted to indignity after indignity,

and by vacillation and poltroonery brought this country, and all Europe, to the very brink of a war.

7. Our expenditure has been increased until it has reached this year to £100,000,000. A war-credit has been required in this year amounting to £11,000,000, for which there is nothing whatever to show.

8. British commerce has been depressed, British interests neglected, the friends of Britain deserted and ill treated. British subjects not supported as they ought to have been, British officers scandalously discountenanced.

9. Continual hostilities in South Africa or Egypt during the whole term of the Gladstone Administration.

It is easy to strike a balance, and to perceive that five years of Whig-Radical Government have operated most injuriously for the interests of the United Kingdom. At first thought, before one has considered what the assurance of the party is, it is most difficult to believe that men who have failed so signally, and who have really no merit of any sort to plead, should presume to come before the electors at all. They would be more disposed to hide their heads, as many would think, and be only too glad if they, with their faults and their follies, could be forgotten. But no; they have effrontery if they are without desert: a sense of the deceptions which they have practised, and the mischief which they have caused, does not abash them in the least, but rather stimulates them to fresh efforts on the old lines. As their past conduct has damaged them, they take care to be silent concerning finance and foreign affairs; while they seek favour by promising more lavishly than ever,

and by vilifying the Conservative Government, now only four months old, which they accuse of having adopted their policy, and of having retreated from all the professions made by it when it was in opposition.

If what they lay to the Conservative charge were true (which it is not) surely that would not wipe out the dire effects of Liberal errors and incapacities. The worst they can charge the Conservatives with is that they are about to do ill to the country; the truth or untruth of which charge only the future can determine. We retort upon them that they have already, in the past five years, done incalculable evils, and that these evils are accomplished facts. We call upon them to defend their past conduct if they can. When they may have done that—but not till then—they may see clearly to pull motives out of their adversaries' eyes. They have been tried in the balance and found wanting: their first business should be to get an acquittal for themselves: nothing that they can lay to the charge of their successors will supersede the necessity of doing that.

It is very well known how Conservatives have assumed any responsibility at all at this conjuncture. They took office most unwillingly, because Mr Gladstone and his colleagues thought proper, last summer, to desert their posts as Ministers, and it was imperatively necessary that the Queen's Government should be carried on. They knew well that there was a strong majority against them in the moribund House of Commons; that it was impossible for them to give effect to any legislative measure bearing the impress of a Conservative policy; and that the utmost they could hope to do until the registers should be ready for a new election, would be to steady

our oscillating and nerveless foreign policy, to raise the necessary revenue for the year, and to put some check on the ruinous expense which was being incurred. This is a very different thing from borrowing the policy of the late Government. To borrow that, they must sully the national honour, make away with the national possessions, grovel before the nation's enemies, wage bloody and useless wars, desert allies, cruelly ill-use and abandon devoted and deserving public servants, and squander without stint the public means. Dare the ex-Ministers to say that they have done these things?

That the Conservatives do not make reckless and wholesale promises ought to be a point in their favour, instead of an objection. Their first and principal task will be to remedy, if they can, the chaotic state of things to which their predecessors have brought us. They are most ready to make reforms and improvements, but their acceptance of these terms does not include the uprooting of our institutions or the direction of legal raids upon selected classes of the community. Pretensions like this are modest enough; and there is a fair probability that they will be acted up to, which is more than can be predicted of the wonderful universal enriching schemes of their opponents.

A repetition of the Whig-Radical Government will mean undoubtedly a repetition of its blunders, extravagance, wars, and slaughter. Our constituencies cannot have back the men without that which, as Falstaff said, grows to them. Once place the empire again at their mercy, and they will not be long before they have made progress in overturning it. It will be too late when we may be again

embroiled, impoverished, shorn, and beaten, to repent of the ready ear lent to specious promises. The evils should be prevented, and the time for prevention is *now*. It will be too late to repent or to retract after a vote for the Liberals shall once have been given. That vote will decide our fate for many years. Let another period of Liberal rule be entered upon, and the working man may prepare for more of such prosperity as he has enjoyed for five years past. Did he grow richer under the Whig-Radicals? Assuredly not; neither will he if he shall place them in power again. These things should be well considered before the momentous vote is given; for the time is fraught with very heavy issues. If the majority of us act wisely we shall conserve those English institutions under which we grew great; under which our trade extended to the utmost bounds of the earth, and our empire, stretching east and west, reunited its arms on the far side of the world. If, tempted away by phantom lights, we desert our trust and give the adversary his will of

that inheritance which it is our duty, and should be our pride, to uphold, our repentance will be bitter ere long, when we shall not only be cheated of the prize that was set before us, but find ourselves bereft of all that made progress and prosperity possible. There can be no such thing as Britons really thriving by the plunder of Britons; there can be no advancement if we wreck, or suffer to be wrecked, our ancient political and social system. We must advance together as a nation or we certainly shall never advance at all; nay, by making undue and unjust haste to grow rich, we shall fall into irretrievable confusion. The word of doom is not spoken yet, but it very soon must be. We implore our countrymen, before uttering it, to give heed to the things which have been here set before them, and to vindicate the law which has made almost every able-bodied subject of the Queen a voter, by showing their superiority to quackery and illusion, by rising above petty and selfish inventions, and by upholding the grand and time-honoured interests of our ancient nation.

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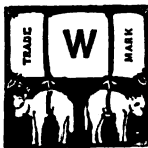
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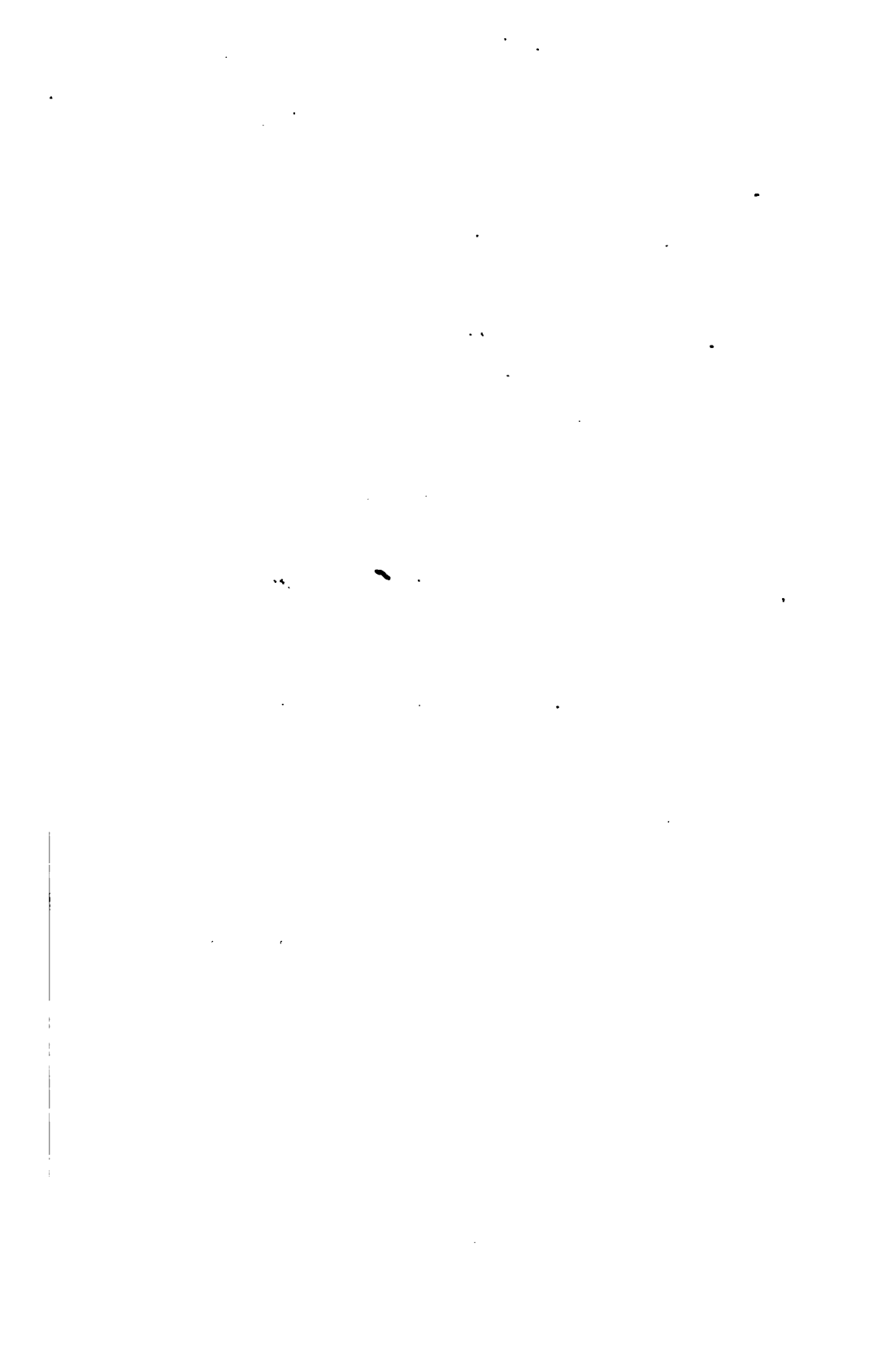
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FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART IX.

CHAPTER XXXV.—LESLIE LISTENS TO A CONFESSION.

PROVERBS will prove true in more senses than one. That of "More haste, less speed," would come into Ralph Leslie's head when the "Flying Scotchman" ran itself into some goods wagons and off the rails, just before entering Darlington Station. It had been "slowing," and so no great damage was done; but there was delay in the delivery of the passengers in London. So Ralph "missed connections" with the South-Eastern train, and consequently with the steamer he hoped to catch at Brindisi. It was not in his nature to tear his hair or rend his garments; but none the less was he miserable and bitterly disappointed. He did the best and wisest thing in the circumstances, and had himself driven to the Sumatra offices in Leadenhall Street. There he found no less a person than Sir Stamford Scrapper. For the calming of their shareholders, the Board had sent

a circular to all the City editors, stating that they had received no unsatisfactory news from the Settlement, and intimating that they saw no reason to attach the slightest importance to the alarming reports which had been rashly set afloat. Nevertheless, though the chairman tried to put a pleasant face upon it, it was evident that he was anxious, not to say alarmed. Of course his anxiety communicated itself to Leslie, whose poetic imagination had perhaps got the better of his common-sense, and was conjuring up every kind of appalling tragedy. Before the lover and the chairman had talked together for ten minutes, they had almost frightened each other into temporary fits, though Leslie was in the deepest mourning. On the principle, possibly, of never crying over spilt milk, Sir Stamford had uttered no syllable of condolence as to the death of his visitor's mother; and in the

horror of the bereavements which were still in suspense, Leslie had not resented or even remarked the omission.

"So you are going out at last, Mr Leslie," exclaimed Sir Stamford. "I am delighted to hear it. Even should all be well, we are short-handed at Sanga; or rather, we are short-headed. And should anything have happened——"

There Leslie made a gesture that interrupted him. "Well, well, we will hope the best; and I don't attach any importance to the telegram. But you have missed the Candahar at Brindisi—there can be no question of that."

"No question whatever; and now, how to get on. To tell the truth, that was what brought me here so quickly: I thought your people might be able to inform me."

"To be sure—to be sure; our manager is the very man. He has all the sailings and the steamings for the Straits at his finger-ends."

And Sir Stamford, ringing the bell, sent a message, begging Mr Jennings to step that way. The accuracy of Mr Jennings's information did not belie his character.

"If you have missed the Candahar, Mr Leslie, it does not much matter. That is to say, if, by way of consolation for roughish fare and some lack of society, you can content yourself with tolerable speed and plenty of space—— You don't care about such trifles? Ah, very well; then I have your affair all ready managed for you. You know, sir," he said, turning to the chairman, "Brooks, Bateson, & Co. will be ready to do anything for us,—as they well may, for we are their best customers. Their steamer, the Canton Castle, ought to touch at Palermo three days hence. She

has swift despatch for Palermo, Port Said, Penang, and Singapore. Starting this evening and travelling straight on, Mr Leslie can easily be in Sicily to meet her, unless there should be a hitch in communications from Naples. But with your permission, sir, I can easily settle with the owners to send a message to their agents at Palermo. There the ship will be detained over her lading till Mr Leslie turns up."

"Do so, Mr Jennings; do so by all means—that is to say, if you are agreeable, Mr Leslie. And remember, when you get out to Sanga, should anything have happened to the Resident, that you are to spare no expense in forwarding news by special vessels or otherwise; and I may as well give you a written authority to that effect."

"If anything should have happened to the Resident!" thought Ralph, as he was driven westward again to the office of the President of the Council, where he hoped to find Jack Venables. It was clear that those shrewd men of business in Leadenhall Street feared the worst, although they were trying to hope the best. And what a journey lay before him, to be travelled out in the thickening horrors of suspense! Under any circumstances, he could hope to hear nothing until his steamer communicated with the shore at Port Said.

Jack Venables, with his many irons in the fire, had always been a doubtful bargain to the Government: though doing his official work by fits and starts, his spurts were often worth the plodding routine of other men. Now that he was to sit in the House for Ballyslattery, he had given in his resignation to his noble friend and patron, and was only filling his official arm-chair until his successor

should be appointed. So it was with even an easier conscience than usual that he had hustled all the bundles of papers aside, and bade the messenger deny him to everybody whose business was not absolutely urgent. His body was there within the precincts of the Council office,—worse luck,—but his thoughts were far away in the spice-groves of the Southern Pacific.

"My dear Leslie—my dear Ralph, I had been looking for you to-morrow, but hardly to-day."

Ralph blushed at what seemed a hinted accusation of heartlessness, though Jack had never meant it so. Taking a misfortune in Sumatra, or the probability of some misfortune, for granted, he rapidly ran over what he had been doing, and told what he had arranged. "My traps have been all ready for long; there is no difficulty about them. I leave the heavy luggage to be sent out after me; and I start for Naples in light travelling equipment, with a rifle, a carbine, and a couple of revolvers besides. Surely it was by some presentiment that I provided myself with so formidable a battery."

"But, God bless me, Ralph!" said Jack, smiling sadly, "you know you never could hit a haystack!"

"And I hardly profess to be a crack shot now. But all the same, I have been making progress. I have been practising steadily with pistols, and with the rifle at the volunteer range near Roodholme. And you know I am pretty cool and have my nerves under tolerable command, as some of those Malays may learn on occasion," he went on, with such a look as Jack had never seen before on his placid and handsome features.

"Heaven help us! after all, he

is but one of ourselves," thought Jack; "and I, for one, should be sorry to face him, if he were thirsting for *my* blood and *his* were up."

The next idea that occurred to him, as it had occurred before, was that he would cast his constituents and his City affairs to the winds, and be off with Ralph that very evening. There were historical precedents in favour of such prompt action. Had not Lord Clyde gone off to take the command in India with something like a half-dozen of collars and a tooth-brush? and he flattered himself that he was better provided. But the calmer Ralph had no idea of letting his friend play the fool in performing the Pylades to his Orestes.

"My path of duty is plain, and it leads me straight to the Canton Castle at Palermo. You have nothing to do on board that *galère*; and permit me to add, that should you leave England suddenly, you would be behaving badly to many of the people you left behind."

"Possibly you are right," sighed Jack, reluctantly giving up his wild proposal. "If the worst comes to the worst, you can always telegraph for me, though it takes time going half across the globe. What fun you may have in the way of fighting! No, I don't mean that; but it is hard to be doomed to sit with my hands crossed while you go to the help of our friends, should they need help."

"God knows, you need not envy me the voyage," was the reply; "and my time of involuntary inaction will be intolerable torment."

In answer to which, the only comfort Jack could offer was a silent shaking of the hand.

Mr Jennings's predictions as to the society on board the Canton Castle were fulfilled. With the exception of a Sicilian lady, shipped for Port Said, who was chronically

sea-sick, Ralph found but a single companion. As for the skipper, he was an honest old sea-dog, who seldom opened his mouth, except to give orders, or to stow away a heavy ground cargo of the rough though plentiful fare. At any other time Ralph's fellow-traveller would have greatly excited his curiosity. There was a mystery about the man, as Ralph felt from the first; but at that moment all the world was indifferent to him. He scarcely saw the precipices of the Monte Pellegrino; "The Golden Shell" glittered unheeded before his dreamy eyes; and as they steamed southwards through the glorious Straits of Messina, the Canton Castle might have been threading the icebergs of Smith's Sound, for anything Ralph knew to the contrary. Then disappointment followed disappointment. No news at Malta, where they lay broiling and unlading for a few hours; not a single word from Sumatra at Port Said; not a word at Suez. There was a hot blast from the deserts as they steamed down the Red Sea; and perhaps it rather did Ralph good than otherwise. It acted on him as an anodyne, and soothed his sharper pangs.

But it affected his fellow-traveller more seriously. Ralph and this Mr Smith had been good friends enough. Many times in the day they exchanged ordinary civilities; but they sat at meals in a Pythagorean silence which was seldom interrupted. Had Captain Benbow been of a more convivial temperament, he must have cursed the fate which had given him such dull companions. Had he had the slightest sense of humour, he must have smiled, nevertheless, at the dexterity with which they cut down the table and cabin talk to the lowest point compatible with

bare civility. But as Benbow was neither convivial nor observant, he simply contented himself with wondering how two well-grown men continued to support nature on such inadequate sustenance. Leslie looked as if he were going into a consumption, with the hectic flush on his cheeks and the wandering lights in his eyes; while Mr Smith appeared to have gone into a decline many months before, and to be holding on to his life by something like spasms of volition.

Such being the case, it was hardly to be wondered at that Smith should have collapsed under the heat of the Red Sea; and Leslie, for one, was not at all surprised when he learned that the other passenger was laid up in his cabin. The news did not shock him, and rather did him good. It was not in his nature to know that a fellow-creature needed his services, without doing his best as consoler or sick-nurse. So, rousing himself, he shook some of his personal troubles from his shoulders, and after knocking repeatedly without receiving a reply, he opened the door of Mr Smith's cabin.

A glance was sufficient to show that he need not stand upon ceremony. As the French put it expressively, Smith was "beating the country,"—that is to say, he was tossing restlessly in bed, and throwing his arms about in the air, while his lips were moving and murmuring inarticulately. That the case was grave was very certain, and the Canton Castle carried no doctor. Leslie did not gain much by calling the skipper into consultation. Benbow prescribed a stiff brimmer of brandy-and-water by way of specific, which did not altogether recommend itself to Leslie's good sense; and the first officer mournfully shook his head, muttering something about a sheet, the sail-

maker, and the Church-service. So that Ralph, though he knew next to nothing of medicine, took the case into his own hands. He had the patient carried on to the deck upon a mattress, and stretched on the poop under the sail that had been rigged by way of awning. We need not go into the details of his unscientific treatment, but by indefatigable nursing he pulled the patient through.

In ordinary circumstances the success that had crowned his self-sacrifice would have richly rewarded him for his good-nature and Christian charity. So it did in a measure. Yet, all-Christian as he was, he felt something like the surgeon who has brought back to life the body of a murderer handed over to the school for anatomical purposes. In the ravings of delirium, through the watches of the nights, his patient had spoken wildly and incoherently. Ralph, who had listened involuntarily and much against the grain, had nevertheless as involuntarily tried to put together the pieces of the puzzle. In that he had failed; yet he had come to the conclusion that the object of his cares must be a consummate scoundrel. And from what Ralph could gather—and it was confirmed by Smith's appearance—he had been guilty of no such daring atrocity as murder, but of swindling, a breach of trust, or forgery, or some similar scandalous felony of the first order. The only point in his favour was, that apparently remorse had been lying heavily on him.

Had Jack Venables been in Ralph Leslie's place he would probably have been just as good-natured in the way of sick-nursing. But when Jack had revived the rascal, he would have shrunk from pressing himself as father-confessor: he would simply have de-

clined any thanks, and cut further acquaintance. But unless I have made a poor hand of my portrait of Ralph, it will be understood that it was altogether foreign to his character that he should behave so. His good offices had pledged him to this dubious *protégé*, and conscience told him that the cure of the soul was of infinitely more consequence than the care of the body. But now that the convalescent was regaining strength, he was not to be brought to confession save of his own free will. Ralph was in more than two minds as to the depth of his patient's penitence: in any case, the chances would be in his favour if he struck while the iron was hot and made more malleable by recent affliction.

He made up his mind one evening during supper, and the opportunity came that very night. "How beautiful is night!" sighs out Thalaba in Southey's poem; and that night, undoubtedly, was most beautiful, according to an Arab's notions. The lustrous moon was riding in a cloudless sky, amid a gorgeous illumination of constellations. So brilliant was the night, that Leslie fancied he could see the flickering of the heated air between the sea and the starshine. The surface of that stirless water was broken by phosphorescent flashes, and the waves in the wake of the screw were lighted up as by myriads of wax candles, or rather by an electrical glare, for there was something "uncanny" in the radiance. With an easy mind, the weird beauties of the night would have stirred Leslie's poetical soul to its depths: as it was, his preoccupations and his dramatic instincts interested him in a solitary human personality. Smith had been making steady progress; yet now he sat huddled up in an attitude of profound dejection. If he saw the

sea or the skies, he seemed to take as little note of one or the other as a new-born babe. "Now is my time," thought Leslie, as he left the shadows of the funnel. Sorely against his will he was going to discharge an imperative duty: were Smith to meet his advances with a rebuff, it could not touch him in anything but his vanity; yet somehow his heart beat at double time, as if he were bracing himself for the most momentous of interviews. At the sound of the footsteps in the stillness of the night, Smith started like the skulking thief who feels a hand suddenly on his shoulder. But when he saw who it was, he quickly recovered himself, though Ralph could fancy that he brushed away a tear.

Mastering his instinctive repugnance, murmuring to himself, "May heaven forgive me if I am hypocritical!" he sat down by Smith's side. The other shrank away, glanced hurriedly around him, and then sidled up, though still shrinkingly, against Ralph, as a much-badgered cat responds to a caress. To Ralph, whose faculties were all upon the stretch, Smith seemed to be craving for some human fellowship, which had long been denied him. So Ralph snatched at the ball on the bound, and laid a gentle hand on that of the other man.

"May God bless you, Mr Leslie!" was the unexpected answer. "I may think I owe you little kindness for saving my life, but you meant well; and you have bound me to you, body and soul."

"I did what I should have done for anybody in similar case, and, so far, you owe me nothing. But if you really feel grateful, as you say, Mr Smith—and I don't doubt it—shall I tell you how you may discharge the debt?"

"Surely."

"By doubling it. There is some-

thing weighing on your mind, and you would be easier were you to make a clean breast of it."

"What! I have been talking in my delirium. I thought as much," interrupted Smith hastily, looking round him as if he would have been only too glad to bolt, had he been anywhere but on a ship in a waste of water.

"You have been talking, Mr Smith, but I have no wish to entrap you. I know nothing more of you or of your story, except that you *have* a story which you have reasons for not telling. As for me, I need not say to a man of your penetration that I am by no means curious. It is less than nothing to me personally whether you speak or not."

Smith relapsed into reflection. Ralph stirred him up, after a minute.

"I may hint, too, that since your illness and your convalescence, you have neglected certain precautions you took before. You strike me as being an older man by some fifteen years; and the illness, though it has pulled you down, does not account for half of them."

It struck Mr Smith's conscience, that had Mr Leslie said he was an absconding swindler, he could hardly have put it much more plainly.

After reflecting again, he took his resolution.

"You have said that you are not curious, and I believe it. If I do make a clean breast of it, as you propose, may I count on your absolute discretion? One word from you will suffice."

Leslie hesitated and shook his head. "I can make no rash promise of the kind. Do you not see, that on your own admission—and you must forgive me the suggestion—I might possibly be pledging myself to be the tacit accomplice in a crime?"

Smith rose as if he meant to

cut short the interview; yet he did not go far away. "If you will not pledge yourself, I cannot speak," he said over his shoulder, gruffly and shortly.

Then it was Ralph's turn to think. If he did invite the man's confidence, and become the depository of some unwelcome secret, society was no worse off than before, nor could the interests of justice suffer. So long as he knew nothing, he could do nothing to help justice. While, on the other hand, if Smith were persuaded to speak at all, he might be prevailed upon to make further confession. Besides, Ralph was urged on by a strange presentiment, oddly inconsistent with the uninquisitive nature of which he had boasted, but which told him that he might hear something to somebody's advantage. Right or wrong, he did make up his mind.

"If you will tell me anything you wish to tell, Mr 'Smith,'"—and he laid marked emphasis on the pseudo-patronymic,—*"I give you my word that it goes no further, unless with your full and free consent."*

"Smith" heaved a sigh, as if he were throwing a weight off his breast. "God bless you, Mr Leslie! I believe you were sent on board this ship as my better angel. In saving a life that I have often longed to be rid of, you may have done me a better service than I supposed; you may have given me time for repentance and atonement."

Whereupon he burned his boats, and cut off all possibility of retreat.

"My name is not Smith, but Mungo Campbell."

Leslie half jumped from his seat, but incontinently recollecting himself, sat down again.

"What! You have heard that

name before. Ay—Leslie—Leslie—of course you are a Scotsman, though you have not a touch of the accent I have tried indifferently to conceal. I trust in heaven, sir, that you were not one of the shareholders of that unhappy bank."

"I held no shares myself," answered Leslie; then he added with deliberate honesty, "but dear friends of mine have been ruined."

"The finger of Providence!—the finger of Providence!" exclaimed the other. "It has always been tracking me and pointing at me, and now it has brought me to my knees."

There was a light, almost like that of insanity, in his eyes. It told a terrible tale of internal struggles, and of prolonged mental sufferings. Leslie felt himself torn asunder between the promptings of indignation and compassion. Then this Cain, who had been driven from society with the brand of infamy on his forehead, settled down into the calm and methodical man of business. The habit of business seemed to have carried him back from the Red Sea trip to the counting-house in Buchanan Street, within rifle-shot of the Broomielaw. He expounded facts and figures clearly enough—sensational facts, and most startling figures. By way of confirmation, he produced from a breast-pocket a note-book filled with precise memoranda.

"They advertised a reward of a couple of thousand pounds for my apprehension," he said; "and had they offered ten, ay, or twenty times as much, they would have had a cheap bargain could they have caught me and compelled me to speak. They knew I was indebted to the bank in over a million. They knew I was far

the largest shareholder besides. But they fancied I had been brought to grief by mad speculation—that the assets I could show were not worth counting upon. Well, they were wrong. When I told my colleagues and fellow-swindlers, who began latterly to worry me, that I only wanted time to work round, I was speaking the solemn truth. Being living lies themselves, and sharp men of business to boot, it was but natural that they should not believe a word of it. It was true that for the time I had neither cash nor credit, and when the bank stopped further supplies I was brought to a deadlock. The smash we had been expecting had come at last, and there was nothing left but to be gone. All my plans had been laid; all my precautions were taken. While my thoughts were riveted to the stone and lime of our bank premises as fast and firm as any of our fire-proof safes, my body had gone cruising in my steam-yacht from my summer residence on the coast of Argyleshire. I was landed at Belfast. I covered my trail, and took shipping from Queenstown for America, whither I had consigned the bulk of my treasure. The sums I had been borrowing from the shareholders of the bank had been duly transmitted beyond the Atlantic. I was nearly as cute as the world had given me credit for being; and my only fault, from the business point of view, was that of being over-sanguine. The seed I had sown was to bear fruit many-fold, but I had counted upon reaping before the time of the harvest. In fact, owing to family connections, I had launched out audaciously in American speculations—raising money upon one to invest it in another. Worse luck for me, I

had only too good information. I had gone shares in promising mining claims; I had sunk large sums in developing them. I was an active member in a syndicate that was financing a trans-continental line of railway, with vast concessions of State domains that could only be gradually realised, and we were at close grips for the moment with Jay Gould and Vanderbilt. I was far in with a 'cotton corner' at New York. Never was there such a combination of temporary ill-luck; but from the moment that Providence came down upon me and drove me forth from my kind—from that moment the tide began to turn."

"One thing puzzles me," interposed Leslie, who had been lending a most attentive and business-like ear, "and that is, how the liquidators, who have a claim on your estate, were unable to hit upon the trace of those investments. I know something about it, for I have been looking into the bank's affairs," he added.

"I do not know how you should come to be so well informed about the bankruptcy affairs, but being so, it is very natural you should ask the question. And if, like most Scots, you are curious in metaphysics, I can submit a remarkable psychological phenomenon for your study. Sanguine as I was, I knew I was running a match against luck and time, and I did my best to take measures accordingly. All chances weighed, it seemed to me more prudent to stake on the honesty of an individual I believed I knew, rather than trust everything to time or circumstances. The whole of those American transactions were undertaken in the name of a man who is my nephew by marriage. He will die either a millionaire or a beggar

—there is no mean for him. He is perhaps the shrewdest fellow I ever met; yet, strange to say, he has been absolutely true to me. How he reconciles things to his conscience all round, I cannot tell; for he is in the secret of my eclipse and false name, and he knows well that I am badly wanted by the liquidators. He prides himself on being a 'smart man'; he could repudiate me and appropriate my possessions at any moment. Yet he has always accounted to me for every dollar: he is trustee at this moment of vast accumulations, re-invested at handsome prospective profits; and, in short, has hitherto been always on the square with me, though he may have behaved to the bank and its creditors like a scoundrel."

Leslie sat thoughtful and speechless. With the money that this man could repay, the load of the bank's liabilities would be so lightened, that Moray, were he indeed alive, might have come home again the master of Glenconan—that Grace might have become his own wife to-morrow, with easy mind and a comfortable income.

Too late! Too late! This infernal swindler, and such as he, had been the death of a man who was worth ten thousand of him, and wrecked the future which might have been so bright and prosperous.

Smith, or Mr Mungo Campbell, talked or "maundered" on. He seemed to have forgotten the presence of his father-confessor, and was following out the train of his thoughts. He was unconscious that in talking to the

kind-hearted stranger who had been his sick-nurse, he was playing within reach of the claws of a tiger; for Leslie for the time had wellnigh lost his self-control, and was struggling with passions that almost maddened him.

"How can we explain those inconsistencies of moral character?" proceeded Mr "Smith," indulging his metaphysical speculations on the brink of the invisible abyss. "And yet it is stranger still to think, looking back, how I could ever have lowered myself to such depths of rascality. Would you know what I suffered in slipping down the hill? God forbid that you should ever learn it by experience. According to the classics, the descent to Avernus is easy; but the Bible says that the ways of transgressors are hard. And the Bible morality, as usual, has the best of it. They tell you I was the vilest of hypocrites when I gave my money to churches and charities. Not a bit of it. I delighted in doing generous actions for their own sake; and if I confess that I was in too great haste to grow rich, still I believe I should have sanctified my fortune to good works when I had amassed it, and might have died in the odour of benevolence, like a Peabody or a Sir Joseph Mason. It was a headlong race against Time, and Time won it by a neck or so. That is God's own truth; and so may God help me, for He only knows how I have suffered!"

And then, worn out by agitation and weakened by recent illness, the fugitive director dropped his face in his hands, and broke down in a storm of sobs and tears.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—PENITENT AND CONFESSOR.

Ralph would have been soft as warm wax to the weeping of a woman, and it was almost worse with him when he saw this man crushed down under the weight of his sins and sorrows. His indignation was hot as ever; his anger was already half disarmed. If the sinner should prove his penitence by making ample atonement, why, he would try to forgive him, as he trusted that God might.

"Do you fancy I have been the happier," said Smith, exciting himself again, "that I have kept my person out of the clutches of the law, and saved my treasure as well!—my treasure!" and in the way in which he uttered the word there was a world of commentary on the text that all we most covet is vanity.

Ralph saw his opportunity and seized it. "Assuredly not; what can all your money profit you? more than a millionaire, and a hunted fugitive going about with a price on your head and a slight disguise that may slip from you again, as circumstances have stripped it from you now! So little do I fancy it, that I believe no man could do you a greater kindness than by persuading your better judgment that it would be best to go straight back to Scotland."

The instincts of self-preservation are strong, especially when they have been ingrained as the habits of one's life. With the lights of semi-insanity flickering in his eyes, Smith looked at Ralph with a glance of furtive suspicion. "You are thinking already of going back from your word; you mean to betray me into the hands of my enemies."

And he paced the deck with

short irregular strides, swinging his arms about, and muttering sullenly to himself. "Another man might have been sorely tempted to give him up, and might have justified the breach of promise by specious casuistry. Like Herod, Ralph might have said to himself, 'I have given a hasty pledge; but have I any right to hold myself to it, considering the interests that are affected?' But Ralph had no idea of tampering with evil that good might come, and it was his principle that honesty was the best policy in all circumstances.

"A man of honour has only his word, and I don't go back from mine, even when——"

"Even when you are dealing with a scoundrel steeped in dishonour to the lips?"

"I did not say so, nor did I mean it altogether. I see you have suffered intensely, Mr Campbell. Nevertheless, you will forgive my saying that I know you too little to judge how far your penitence may be sincere. But this I do know, that no man, situated as you are, had ever a grander opportunity of retrieving great part of the misery he has helped to cause. May I ask," he added, abruptly, "what scheme of life you have sketched out for yourself,—what are your immediate intentions in wandering like the wandering Jew?"

Smith looked at him in surprise, and broke out bitterly. "Need you ask about my future? Of course it is a blank; and as for my immediate objects, I do not know that they greatly concern you. But forgive me; I am wrong, and I forget my debt to you. As I have told so much, I may tell you more; and

after all, what does it all matter? I consulted doctors in Spain: they warned me that I was threatened by consumption, that one lung was seriously affected already. They said that my best chance was prolonged residence in some tropical climate; and it struck me I might try Java, where I should be little likely to meet with old acquaintances. People say it is a paradise too; if so, it was my only chance of getting a glimpse at heaven."

There was so much of sadness and of despair in his tone, that for the moment other considerations were swallowed up in Ralph's compassion. It was for Campbell's own sake, not for that of the Morays—if they were alive—that he pled with the fugitive earnestly and eloquently.

"You may yet see another heaven than the Spice Islands, if you will only listen while still there is time. The door of retreat, the way of noble reparation, is still open to you. But should you shut the door now, with your own hand and with your eyes open, the sufferings that have aged you and broken you ere now, will be nothing to those you will endure for the moment. I speak it solemnly, and I know what I am saying. The heaven you are seeking in the Dutch settlements will be the sure foretaste of hell."

Mr Leslie, it will be admitted, had put the case pretty strongly, and he walked away, leaving his words to work. He guessed shrewdly at the other man's nature and feelings. He knew that after all Campbell had gone through, the feeling that he might be at the crisis of his fate would weigh with him more than anything. For long he had resigned himself to hopeless despondency. Ralph had shown him that there were still glimmerings of hope which might

brighten into comfort again or be quenched in despair. And he believed that "Smith" would feel all depended on his present decision.

Nor did those shrewd calculations deceive him. After an anxious half-hour, his penitent came up more cheerful than he had seen him before. He spoke humbly and quietly, yet with more of the air of an equal; and the prospect of retracing his steps had taken some of the stoop out of his shoulders.

"I am likely to owe you something more than my life, Mr Leslie. I have come to you for advice, or rather for instructions. I put myself absolutely in your hands."

"Let me understand you," said Ralph, speaking very quickly, and vainly struggling to repress his emotions. "You really mean to act as I shall counsel you?"

"Can you look in my face, Mr Leslie, and doubt it? Can you be so blind as not to see that your prescriptions have done me good already. You are a tender sick-nurse, as I know well; but believe me, you are a better doctor for the mind diseased than for the body. My mind, such as it is, is made up. I go ashore at Penang; I go back to Glasgow; and perhaps it is the best pledge of my sincerity, that in so doing I sacrifice my life. The air of a Scotch jail is scarcely likely to be so beneficial for a consumptive as the breath of the cinnamon and nutmeg groves of the South."

What Campbell said was extremely natural; yet, after all, it was an unpleasant way of putting it. It made Leslie act the executioner, as well as the confessor and the judge, and sentence the victim before him to slow but certain death.

Leslie might have hesitated, but he would not have drawn back.

He had no idea at any cost of compromising with what was right, and that Campbell was taking the right course was evident. But had he felt serious embarrassment, Campbell would have come to the rescue.

"And should I die in prison, or in shame and destitution, I shall be more grateful to you for your advice, than for your help in the cabin below here. We understand each other, and no more need be said."

On second thoughts, however, it struck our friend that something more ought to be said. He knew little of Campbell, and had no strong faith in sudden conversions. That Campbell was sincere at the present moment he could not doubt; he said that were a detective to turn up with a pair of handcuffs, the culprit would stretch out his hands with satisfaction. But once ashore on the wharves of Penang, exchanging the close confinement of the ship for the bustle of successful traffic, beyond the reach of Leslie's presence and influence, the good resolutions might vanish like the visions of an ugly dream, and this slippery customer might slip through their fingers. Where so very much was at stake, it might be safer to communicate with the colonial police; and yet, in the circumstances, such a course was not only ungenerous but actually out of the question.

Here again the intelligent "Mr Smith," his faculties sharpened by penitence and gratitude, helped his preserver out of the dilemma. Having repeatedly marked Ralph's eyes reflectively fixed upon him, and as quickly diverted again on being observed, on one of these occasions Smith walked straight up to him.

"Thanks to you, Mr Leslie, I am in so much better spirits, that

were it not a piece of impertinence, I might say, 'A penny for your thoughts.' Though, for the matter of that, I can guess them. You have been puzzling yourself as to what is to be done about me when we arrive at Penang."

Ralph blushed and stammered, but could not deny the impeachment.

"Well, I will tell you what you must do. You must trust everything to me: for the best of reasons,—that you cannot help yourself, not to speak of your being fast tied by your promise. Say you deliver me to the officers; and as there are no warrants out against me in the Settlement, I doubt whether you can do it. Say you detain me and have my identity proved, and send me back to Scotland in custody. *Cui bono?* You see, I remember something of the humanities I picked up at Glasgow High School. I should be punished, no doubt; but the bank would get no pecuniary profit thereby. You could not betray the financial confidences I placed in you; and if you could, each dollar of my American investments is in the name of Van Swindel, my wife's nephew. But leave me free to go and give myself up: I swear that I shall start by the first packet; that I shall make a clean breast of all my delinquencies to the liquidators; and that I shall strip myself of my last shilling for their benefit. The only possible hitch—you see, I play all my cards down on the table—the only possible hitch is that Van Swindel should prove recalcitrant. But judging by the past, I may count on that eccentric honesty of his; and, in any case, nobody can influence him but I. That is the situation, Mr Leslie. What do you say?"

Leslie had grasped the situa-

tion while Campbell was defining it. If he had any misgivings it would have been a mistake to show them; but now he felt few or none.

"I take your word of honour, Mr Campbell; and I leave everything to your honour and conscience. You are bound over now

to honesty by such tremendous penalties, that it is far more your affair than mine or that of my friends. And I am assured that, as we say in Scotland, in spite of all that has come and gone, you will die the honest man that you used to be, and hold your head high hereafter if not here."

CHAPTER XXXVII.—MISS MORAY'S IRISH CHAMPION.

We are doomed to endure much needless misery—none the less real that it is so absolutely gratuitous. Leslie had had fair reason for the apprehensions that had made his voyage to the South a prolongation of torments. But landing at Penang, he learned, to his delight, that the terrible telegram had been absolutely baseless. The matter for it had been traced to some Dutchman at Sarambang, eager to do an injury to the Sumatra Company. If the sender in any degree believed in his news, the wish must have been father to the thought, for at the time things at Sanga were tolerably tranquil. The immediate relief was immense; second thoughts in the reaction of feeling were less satisfactory. For the Company's agents at Penang had received recent and more reliable news which told that troubles were brewing in the Settlement. The Resident was sanguine that they could be easily repressed; but he talked of a trip to Sarambang, that he might seek a personal interview with the Sultan.

As Leslie could not borrow the wings of a bird, he had to make arrangements as to his passage. Meantime, as we have the advantage of him, and can transport ourselves to the scene of his anxieties, we may follow the fortunes of Moray and his daughter.

Moray's first letters, as it may

be remembered, were full of hope. He saw cause to disbelieve in a great future for the Settlement. It was no Poyais scheme, no "wild-cat" speculation, like the Eden of General Scadder. But he foresaw considerable trouble before arriving at the ends towards which he was determined to push forward resolutely. For himself, he had braced all his energies to a work which he confidently counted on accomplishing. In this beginning of a new life he had regained his former spirits. The days that had been dragging by so wearily before he left England, were wellnigh forgotten with the slow liquidation of the Bank claims. He had left means for meeting all probable calls; and the loss of the fortune he had passed a lifetime in amassing was already fading from his memory. He had his daughter with him—new interests were opening before him, with higher aims than mere trading profits and personal aggrandisement. When he had tried his hand at philanthropy among the masses of Eastern London, though with a full purse and practically unlimited credit, he had been but one in a great army of workers—if not a mere private in the ranks, at most a non-commissioned officer. Now he was a politician, a statesman, an autocratic administrator, ruling a little Principality numbering

some 80,000 souls. Nor, with the example of the Rajah of Sarawak before him, need his influence be limited to the Company's domain. He might and he would put down piracy; he would send messages of peace and goodwill among his weaker, though warlike, neighbours; he might do much to accelerate the process of civilisation that had been barely begun in the Sultanate of Sarambang. With those prospects of usefulness opening before him, coloured by a noble if an unavowed ambition, perhaps Moray, settling down in his residential seat at Sanga, was happier than ever he had been before.

His first impressions were only confirmed on further acquaintance. Coal and copper mines had already begun to be wrought; and it was certain they must soon yield remunerative returns. Chinese immigrants were already swinging the cradles at the gold-washings with very satisfactory results. But the real wealth of the Settlement was in the climate and the teeming richness of the soil, wherever the jungle and the forest had been cleared from the banks of the river and its tributaries. To say nothing of the spice-groves that scented the air, the natives were busy already in the sugar and the cotton plantations, which stretched in glossy or snowy shrubberies over alluvial soil, fertilised by immemorial accumulations of leaf-mould. And as a consequence of the security his predecessor had already created, little clusters of dwellings had been rising everywhere on piles in shady nooks and angles along the river, with the rickety landing-places of planks, from which the cultivators shipped their produce.

So far, all was satisfactory. The people were naturally well disposed to a Government which gave them

the unaccustomed blessings of peace and plenty. They could sow their seed with easy minds, now that they were sure of harvests and of markets for the harvests: they could lie down in quiet under their bamboo roofs, with no fear that the village might be in a blaze before morning. So far, then, all was well; nevertheless Mr Moray soon discovered that this very tranquillity held the germs of trouble for him. He had to master the politics of the Settlement for himself; for though his subordinates might be honest, they were certainly dull. Happily he knew nearly enough of the Malay language to be able to communicate with his copper-coloured subjects; at all events, he knew more than enough to make it impossible for interpreters to play tricks with him. And speedily he began to find that in what he had fancied a comfortable seat, there were thorns thrusting themselves through the cushions. On the one hand, the robber-tribes in the neighbourhood doubly resented the new prosperity of the Sanga folks. In the first place, they were very naturally jealous; and in the next place, they were furious at being restrained from their prescriptive rights of reiving and pillage. More than once or twice they had tried the old familiar game; each time the gallant Chamberlain had beaten them back or baffled them. The death of the firm English chief had given them fresh courage; and they had been eager to profit by the interregnum. While, on the other hand, there were Europeans and native princes as well, all ready to utilise their discontent. The Sultan of Sarambang was still friendly: he had a heavy stake, as has been said, in the wellbeing of the Company.

But the Sultan of Sarambang was a weak oriental, and oriental manners prevailed at his Court. He had a baker's dozen of brothers; and as he knew very well, any one of the cadets of his house would have gladly poisoned or assassinated him. He had not the nerve for a cleansing of the palace, or a domestic *coup d'état*, which would have effectually quenched the malevolence in a "blood-bath." Astute foreign traders, presumed to be in the Dutch interest, were intriguing with the malcontent faction and subsidising it. The malcontents were in intimate relations with the tribes of discomfited pirates, already weighing the chances of a successful descent upon Sanga; and these tribes in their turn were believed to be in communication with the scattered inhabitants of the forests of Sanga, who had gained nothing as yet by the English annexation, but who were restrained from their favourite pursuits of robbery, fire-raising, and head-hunting.

That was the situation as Moray saw it in a month, and it may be added that he was not far from the truth.

He thought matters over deliberately, and promptly made up his mind. Like the stoker of the Mississippi steamer in the wild Western ballad, he saw that "his duty was a dead-sure thing," and thenceforward nothing could turn him from his purpose. Nevertheless, already he painfully realised that the sweets of his new post were to be mingled with bitters. He had to break what she would regard as bitterly bad news to his daughter, and steel himself against her prayers and her tears. She had come with him to this barbarous country at the back of the world, on the tacit understanding that they were not to be

separated. But now his duty tore them apart: there was no help for it. When he told her that he must make an expedition immediately to Sarambang, and that he must go alone and leave her behind;—to the girl, who was already beginning to give herself over to the sensuous influences of the balmy air, the soft beauties of nature, and the tropical *bien-être*, it was like a flash of lightning out of a cloudless sky. She would have cared little could she have accompanied him; but on that point he was adamant, and she could not gainsay his arguments.

"Do not pain me needlessly, Grace, by saying more. God knows how gladly I would take you with me! Had the Company's steamer been here, I might possibly have done so. As it is, it is utterly out of the question. There is no accommodation for an English lady in these native boats—and from a native boat you must land at Sarambang; and I would never take my daughter to a barbarous Court."

Put to her in that way, Grace could say no more; and by this time she knew her father too well to insist. But he was bound, besides, to say something of the reasons for his going; and soften them down as he might, they were far from reassuring. The very fact that he left her alone, argued his apprehension of some urgent danger. Not that Grace thought very much of herself,—and indeed she was too innocent to apprehend the worst. On the contrary, trying to forget herself and her fears, she set herself to cheer her father.

"Don't make yourself needlessly uneasy about me, papa. I daresay I shall get on very well in your absence. I *would* come out with you, you know, and I am very glad that I came."

But though both Grace and her

father wore brave faces, it was all they could do to bear up before the separation. No one of his warlike ancestors had given proof of greater courage than Glenconan, when, with a set face that was pale as resolute, he stepped into the great proa that was to carry him to Sarambang. As for Grace, she had bidden him farewell before breaking down; she had stood waving her hand and her handkerchief as long as the little fleet was in sight—for his own boat was escorted by sundry others, all of them armed to the teeth; and then, in a storm of sobs and tears, she had hurried up to the roof of the Residency. Had she had any thoughts but for a single man, she might have taken comfort from the looks of the native guards, who seemed to understand her desolation and sympathise with it. Afterwards, indeed, she recalled their demeanour to some purpose. From the roof, she followed the fleet with tearful eyes, as it was propelled by the sturdy strokes of the sweeps, round the reaches of the winding river. She seemed to see a happy omen, as it slid, comparatively smoothly, over the seething bar; and still she watched it as, standing out to sea, it steered its course for the dim western headland. The taper masts and yards were covered with light clouds of billowy matting; the sails filled slowly to a favouring breeze; and at last it melted away in the distance, like a flight of butterflies flickering in the sunset.

She went to bed to weep, and toss, and wear the night away with broken prayers. Never had she dreamed of feeling so utterly desolate, so absolutely unprotected. "Oh, if Ralph were only here!" she moaned to herself again and again; and little did she fancy that very day Ralph had been chafing

on the wharves of Penang and cursing the channel that separated them. She saw the night through with those broken prayers, and she rose from the bed next morning a different girl. Not that her very natural apprehensions were calmed. On the contrary, she realised more clearly than before the dangers that might threaten her, and very likely she exaggerated them. But she had all the pluck of the soldiers of her race, whose spirits had risen naturally in critical circumstances. She wished from the very bottom of her heart that she were a man, —though that, unfortunately, was past praying for. Being a woman, however, she might do what no man could do so well, and use her helplessness as a shield against possible dangers. As she had said in the letter to her friend Julia, she believed in the chivalry of the Malays: well, she would put it to the proof, and do her utmost to assure their loyalty. Then, if troubles should break out when her father was away, she might animate the garrison in the defence of the Settlement.

Though she had set herself diligently to the study of the Malay grammar, as yet she had got no further than its A B C. But she was one of those women whose looks and smiles say much; and she had, moreover, a feminine interpreter in whom she could trust. Moray, after mature reflection, had decided on not hampering his daughter with an English maid. But they had picked up a Chinese polyglot at Penang, who spoke broken English fairly well, and was much more fluent in the Malay tongue. Already the girl had become fondly attached to her young mistress. And now Grace and her almond-eyed *suivante*, who followed her like a shadow, were to be seen playing the parts of Eveline Be-

renger and Rose Flammock before the defence of the Garde Doloureuse. Indeed there was a sinister resemblance in the circumstances which more than once suggested itself to Grace. The part, be it remembered, seemed to come naturally enough to Miss Moray. The daughter of the governor had always appeared to the Malay soldiers as a bright-humoured being from another world. And now, what with her winning smiles and kindly words—what with largesses of food and fruits and liquor,—there was hardly a man of them who might not have been easily intoxicated into running *amok* for the sake of her beautiful eyes. She had done well in losing no time in taking her precautions and using the only weapons she could handle. There were spies in the Settlement in the pay of the Company's enemies; and the news of the Resident's departure with good part of his fighting force, spread like wildfire among the many who were nearly interested in it.

The late Colonel Chamberlain had been a strong man; but so much could not be said for his secretary and chief subordinate. Mr Briggs, no doubt, was an excellent man of business, and would have made a capital confidential clerk in the City. He was honest as the day, and thoroughly at home in the mysteries of book-keeping and bills of lading. He had drifted from Alexandria southwards to Singapore, and so on to Sumatra; but he was as much abroad in those islands of the South as a Malay might be on the roof of a metropolitan omnibus. Grace lost patience altogether with the smug and kindly little gentleman, who was always overpoweringly civil, and who would have been paternal had she permitted it. He lived in each day as if there need be no to-mor-

row. He never seemed to see an inch beyond his small snub nose; and he did his work thoroughly, conscientiously, and well, like an entomologist peering after beetles, who looked at life through the lens of a microscope. He was left as acting Resident, as managing director—all the rest of it. After all, he was not only the senior Englishman, but the best educated man in the Settlement; and Moray, who hoped that everything was safe till his return, could hardly help himself. With much searching of heart, he had confided his unprotected daughter to the special care of Mr Briggs; and the worthy little clerk had undertaken the charge as he would have undertaken any other duty in the routine of his engagements.

For a week or so after her father's departure, all had gone well, and nothing had occurred to increase her anxieties. Shaking herself gradually free of her fears, as she began to hope for his speedy return, she was sauntering on the little lawn between the Residency and the river late one evening, and in more buoyant spirits than usual. The serene beauty of the tropical night—the stars that had already begun to flash and sparkle, though the sun had scarcely gone down in a blaze of crimson—the silent sweep of the great bats through the scented air—the droning hum of the broad-winged beetles,—all contributed to soothe her. Where everything was so peaceful in the star-spangled twilight, it seemed impossible that there could be trouble impending. Yet she might have remembered that nature, like man, may wear a mask, and that in the dusky solitudes of those silent woods were venomous serpents and prowling jaguars.

A rustling in the bushes near may have reminded her of the fact.

She started with a half-suppressed shriek ; for though a brave girl, she was but a woman after all, and besides, there might be very real danger. She was but partially reassured, when a man, and a white man, stepped out of the shrubs. She knew him, as she knew by sight the few Europeans in Sanga ; and this "Sergeant" Rafferty, as he was styled, was one of the most conspicuous of them. She had spoken more than once to the man, and made sundry inquiries about him, for he had rather interested her. There had been a good deal of romance in his career ; and as he said himself, the devil a bit of use was there in his trying to keep his secrets, for they would always come out when the drink went in. The drink had indeed been the bane of Mr Rafferty, who might otherwise have been a creditable member of the little community. As he further said, it was the drink that had tumbled him down-stairs from a decent position ; he had always holes in his pockets, so that the halfpence would be for iver rowling out ; it was the drink that had brought him down to this Sumathra, which he took to be pretty near at the bottom of the world ; and whether he was to lave his bones there or fall any farther, devil a one of him either knew or greatly cared. In fact, neither knowing nor caring summed up his character ; but he had the invaluable quality under present circumstances of constitutional intrepidity or recklessness.

The Sergeant stepped forward with a military salute. It was noteworthy that the man, usually so ready to talk, waited respectfully for the lonely young lady to address him ; for in spite of his foibles and vices, Rafferty was much of a gentleman. And knowing what he came to say, he be-

haved far more respectfully than if she had been under the escort of her father, the Resident, who had at Sanga almost the power of pit and gallows that had once been possessed by his forefathers in Glenconan.

As for Grace, she had no fear of him, but she felt a foreboding that he was the bearer of evil tidings. She longed to know, yet dreaded to ask ; and seeing what was passing in her mind, Rafferty no longer hesitated.

"I should beg you to pardon me, me lady, for staling on you unawares ; but sure this is no time for standing on ceremony. I was bint upon spaking without them Malays knowing anything of it ; and so I have been kaping a look-out upon the grass here from a bit of a boat on the wather."

"What is it ? Do speak, Mr Rafferty !"

"And sure, miss, what else would it be that I came for ? But don't you be botherin' and making yourself unaisy—it may be little after all. I know nothing of that jabber of theirs, bad luck to it ! and it will be time enough to cry out when we're hurt."

It was a very Irish piece of comfort, considering that the man had clearly come to warn her of dangers in the hope that they might be prevented. It appeared that the acute Mr Rafferty had seen reason to suspect that something was being plotted somewhere among the natives. The Malays of the Settlement were in a state of excitement which they took little pains to conceal. Scouts had been sent up the river in the long, snake-like light craft ; messengers had been coming and going through the jungles. He opined that an attack was threatened, and he greatly doubted whether "thim niggers were to be trusted," who

formed the staple of the garri-son.

Grace, after questioning the man, shared his alarms and his doubts as well. The Malays had seemed to be friendly towards herself; but nevertheless they might be anxious to be rid of their European masters, and have an understanding with warriors of their own blood and colour who might be threatening Sanga from without. With the Resident and half his fighting force away they could hardly have a better opportunity. The natural person she would have consulted in such an emergency was Mr Briggs, and thinking half aloud, the name escaped his lips.

"Is it Briggs then?" queried Mr Rafferty, in tones of infinite contempt. In his disgust he spat upon the ground, and forthwith became covered with confusion.

"I ask your pardon, miss, from the very bottom of my heart; but if I had thought Briggs had anything bigger than the sowl of a newly hatched chicken, I would never have come to you."

Grace could not help smiling, her anxiety notwithstanding. If she did not say so, she was much of Mr Rafferty's opinion,—though, as will be seen, they did the little man injustice. She rapidly reviewed the situation in her mind. If an attack on the place were really intended, she felt that the sole chance of safety was in the loyalty of the native settlers. After all, they had reason to be satisfied with a Government which promised them peace as well as wealth.

Rafferty was disposed respectfully to differ.

"The Lord, He knows well that they're fond enough of money, come by it how they may. But as for *pace*, they prefer fighting to it any day; and why wouldn't

they?" he added, with judicial candour. "I come from Tipperary myself, and I like them none the worse for that."

Indeed, Sergeant Rafferty was the sort of man who would have smoked his pipe on a powder-barrel, and found the situation lend additional flavour to his tobacco. His sole idea in coming to Grace seemed to have been to volunteer to defend her and the Residency with his single arm. But he was open to conviction, and she succeeded in persuading him that it was improbable that any single man could protect four sides of an extensive square against assailants practically innumerable.

"I might be murdered, sure enough—not that it signifies; but what would become of you? Sowl of the blessed St Patrick, what will we do thin, at all, at all?"

"Will you do what I ask you, Rafferty?"

"What else did I come for? You may count on Jack Rafferty, body and spirit, till your father comes back, and beyond that."

"God grant he might come back! Well, Rafferty, you know where to find Matusin?"

Matusin was one of the former chiefs of Sanga, and now occupied a semi-official position as head man of the native community. In short, it was through Matusin that the Resident directed great part of the domestic politics.

"I can find the blayguard fast enough. Unless the divil has stirred him up to do mischief, he'll be sitting smoking and drinking all the night with the rest of them. Bedad, but it's they nigger chiefs that have the fine time of it!"

"Well, will you go straight to Matusin from me? show him this ring of mine, and ask him to come to the Residency here, and to come at once. I don't think there is any

danger for you ; and if there were, I am sure it would not hinder you from doing my errand."

Mr Rafferty snorted contemptuously at the word danger, and did not even deign a reply to that part of the speech. "But how if he would refuse to come?"

"I don't think that he will. Whatever his intentions, he is strong enough to act as he pleases. Go on my errand at any rate. We must leave the rest to God."

Rafferty took the ring and made a dart at the bushes, through which lay the nearest way to his boat. Then, struck by a thought, he hurried back. "But if he should refuse to come, and should

keep howld of me, you will never believe that I desaved you, miss!"

"No, no, Rafferty. I trust you as I would trust my father, were he here."

"Then by this and that"—and Rafferty dropped on one knee with instinctive chivalry,—“by this and that, and till I have seen you safe through this blessed business, not a drop of drink shall pass my lips, were they as cracked as the ‘craythur,’ as they call it, on the mountain behind.”

And Grace felt very grateful to the man for the pledge of devotion, though she could scarcely appreciate all the sublimity of his sacrifice.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—A MODERN EVELINE BERENGER.

When she had despatched her messenger, Grace felt anxious enough. More than she dared to think of depended on the coming interview ; for that it would be granted, she did not doubt. But in the meantime there was something to be done in the way of preparation. The sending the ring had been a stroke of diplomacy : it was the symbol of an authority she did not possess. Her real strength, as she felt, was in her weakness, in her youth and her unprotected situation. She hoped to appeal to the Malay's chivalry as well as to his self-interest. So she made hasty arrangements to set her house in order ; she had the state room disposed with an eye to effect ; and last, though by no means least, she made certain alterations in her toilet. Then she warned her faithful maid to be ready to act as interpreter, though Matusin had some slight knowledge of English, and so, to a certain extent, she could communicate with him directly.

Her suspense did not last long, and it was just as well ; for when she had nothing further to busy herself over, she began to feel painfully nervous. The feeling passed away, when, looking out from the verandah, she heard the splash of the oars in the stream, and saw the flashing of scores of torches. Matusin was coming to make his visit in state. Was he coming as a master to dictate his terms, or as the loyal burgomaster of Sanga, to pay his duty to the Resident's daughter?

She glided back from the verandah into the room and waited ; she could hear the wild beating of her heart. It seemed a good omen that her visitors were landing in dignified silence ; and now that suspense was drawing to an end and the critical moment approached, her courage rose to face the occasion.

The hangings of matting were drawn aside, and Matusin stood in the doorway. The Malay had a certain air of dignity : he was

somewhat past middle age, rather a bulky man, and his dignity was set off by his dress and draperies. He wore the usual costume of a chief of his station and wealth—a dark-green velvet jacket, the collar stiffened with heavy tracery of gold-thread; loose trousers of dark cloth, likewise edged with gold, and a flowing *sarong* of the soft dark plaid that is woven by the women in their native looms. A couple of *kris*es with richly chased handles were thrust through his girdle. And immediately behind this stately apparition,—and a cheering sight it was to Miss Moray, for it seemed to imply a friendly understanding with the natives,—was Mr Rafferty, evidently on his best behaviour, but nevertheless winking intimations of encouragement.

Had she known all that was passing in her visitor's mind, she might have been less satisfied. Indeed, Matusin was in two minds rather than one, and her message had reached him in the nick of time, when a decision was trembling in the balance. The Malay was chivalrous in his way, and courageous to boot, but at the same time, like most orientals, an accomplished hypocrite. He was full of graceful observance, and almost obsequious deference to the Resident's daughter; while he was thinking whether it were not probable, that, himself aiding and abetting, she might not be a slave and a captive within four-and-twenty hours. Had she shown signs of feebleness, her fate might have been sealed. But Grace's natural courage had been animated by the belief that she could count upon Matusin's support and friendship; and in the reaction of her spirits, she spoke with a confidence that did not fail to produce its effect. Matusin was a well-in-

formed and intelligent man, and he knew something of the tenacity with which Europeans kept their hold on any place they had once touched with the tips of their fingers. He knew the Sultan of Sarambang favoured the white strangers; and for himself, he would gladly perpetuate a state of things which had greatly increased his wealth, if it had diminished his personal consequence. Grace's confidence began to gain upon him: he fancied the girl could never have shown such spirit had she not reason to know that her father was at hand with powerful succour. Matusin had a rather formidable fighting force at his disposal, in a stockaded town; moreover, he had old allies and acquaintances among the armed bands that were threatening it, and he pretty nearly came to the conclusion that it would be well to stand by the English.

So, from being ceremoniously reverential he became blandly confidential, and told the stately young lady nearly all he knew. Certain of the forest-tribes in the Sanga territories, stirred up by agents and strengthened by bands from beyond the frontiers, had determined to make themselves masters of the Settlement either by arrangement with the inhabitants or by assault. They said, too—and Matusin was inclined to believe it—that a piratical fleet from the territories to the southward was mustering for their support. So much Grace gathered, partly from the chief's broken English, partly from the interpretation of her handmaiden. Then in turn she began to speak with an energy and cogency of argument which surprised herself. In seeming to trust implicitly to Matusin's loyalty, she appealed strongly to his self-interest. When she remarked that should their enemies get possession of the place,

he would infallibly be pillaged sooner or later, it was very evident that he understood her, and dare not say Nay. Then she spoke of the speedy arrival of her father; of his courage and generosity; of the deep revenge he would take on any one who should play him false or injure his daughter; on the rewards he would freely lavish on the faithful friends who should defend her. I do not say that her charms and her commanding manner weighed with the Malay chief as much as her arguments; but undoubtedly they had no small influence on him. By the prophet and the holy stone, by all the most solemn pledges binding on his countrymen, he vowed that Sanga should be defended till the return of the great white Sultan, unless—and the gesture that ended the sentence implied—unless the assailants should pass over his corpse. Grace thanked her native champion, and dismissed him with the graceful affability of a princess born in the purple.

Rightly or wrongly she believed in him, and so far she felt greatly relieved. At the same time, it was no light matter to be left there in her loneliness, looking forward to the probability of a bloody assault, and a succession of skirmishes or battles to be fought out by savages. And even should the assailants be repulsed from the Settlement, if there were truth in the rumours of the gathering of that piratical fleet, it might come from the southward to the aid of their enemies before her father could appear from the north. And yet, by the way, if Moray knew what was happening at Sanga, he might surely obtain succour from the Sultan.

Shaking off her terrors as best she could, and trusting herself to the God of the helpless, she de-

termined to do all that could be done. There was no reason to despair, but there was urgent necessity for action. Within an hour one of the swiftest proas belonging to the Company, and manned by men whom Rafferty believed he could answer for, had been despatched to Sarambang with letters for her father.

She went through the form of going to bed, but she was up again before the larks, or the birds that answer to our larks in these southern latitudes. Under the guard of Mr Rafferty, though she made him leave his arms behind, for she was resolved to show absolute confidence in the natives—"Divil a wan of me would thrust them," soliloquised her escort, as he concealed a knife and a couple of revolvers in his ample shirt-bosom—she went the round of the straggling town. She had every reason to be satisfied with what she saw. Matusin was clearly preparing to defend himself in earnest. He had set gangs of his people to work on the stockades, strengthening the stakes and building up the breaches. The women were cutting down the rank weeds and clearing soil from the bottoms of the ditches; the men were stacking piles of ammunition near some half-dozen of light field-pieces and howitzers that grinned here and there out of embrasures in low earthworks. But what showed more than anything else that the Malay chief meant fighting, was the measures that were being taken immediately above the town. Where the Sanga river contracted into a narrow channel, running between steep banks overhung with shrubbery, a great tree was being felled on either side. One of them came down with a crash as she reached the spot, sending the showers of spray into her face, and forming

an abattis of foliage impracticable to any boat, beneath the huge trunk that spanned the stream by way of a rough sylvan flying-bridge.

"Bedad, but we should be safe in that quarter anyhow!" exclaimed Rafferty; "and thim barbarous niggers must have the hides of their alligators if they find their way through the bushes there, even in open order, without laving both skin and flesh behind."

For eight-and-forty hours there was no great change in the situation. Incidents and excitement there were in abundance, with perpetual "alarms," as they say in the stage directions of the old plays. That the beleaguering savages were abroad with fire and sword there could be no manner of doubt. Boats came shooting down the river, bearing homeless fugitives wailing piteously for the relatives who had been slaughtered under their eyes or carried away into a captivity worse than death. Confirmatory evidence came in the shape of the mutilated corpses that floated down the stream, to be brought up by the branches of the improvised abattis. The fugitives told tales of sacked villages, of flames spreading far and wide through their crops and their orchards, where everything was dry as tinder after a protracted drought. Grace shuddered as she listened to the horrible stories: with a woman's sympathy she did all a woman could do who knew nothing of the speech of the fugitives, to relieve the destitute and to console the bereaved. But all the same, in the practical turn of the heroism which felt bound to preserve the Settlement for which her father was responsible, she neglected no opportunity of impressing the moral of those events on Matusin. If the enemy remorselessly plundered the

miserable peasants who had neither dared nor tried to defend themselves, how would they deal with a man who was notoriously rich, and who had identified himself with the hated occupation of the English? But Matusin, having once taken the leap, was like the willing horse who needs no spurring. He knew now that in the event of the place being taken he had little mercy to expect,—that he must sink or swim with the handful of Europeans.

During the daytime things were comparatively tranquil; but through two successive nights the dusky starlight was made terrible by sights and sounds that kept the garrison on the alert. Scarcely had the sun gone down before there was a descent of flotillas of boats on the upper reaches of the river. Thanks to the felled trees that blocked the water-way, these flotillas were safe from any counter-attack. And each of the boats was illuminated by a fire in a brazier; on board of each was one or more war-gongs: and each night these infernal illuminations and diabolical concerts were provided for the excitement of the inhabitants of Sanga.

It was strange to see how differently the handful of Europeans was affected by the unfamiliar dangers that threatened them. There were men who might have been brave enough in an ordinary way, when blended in the rank and file of a regiment, who became absolutely helpless in their fear of this barbarian onslaught, as certain savages of those forests are paralysed in presence of the python. The whites had been drawn back into the Residency, and employed in strengthening its defences by way of a citadel; though some of them who knew something of serving guns were told off to the field-

pieces on the first line of defence. So that Grace had every opportunity of studying their characters, which she did, very much to her own surprise, as if it were a problem with little personal interest for her. In fact, what with excitement and want of sleep, she was living in a factitious state of exaltation, though her brain was clearer and her resolutions were more prompt than she had ever known them before.

She remarked that the volatile and harebrained Mr Rafferty, when the immediate work of provisionally fortifying the Residency was done, had become almost phlegmatic. Though always ready to spring to attention when she came near, though he would follow her with the fidelity and jealousy of a favourite dog, yet at other times he would smoke cheroots with his hands in his pockets; he was lulled into tranquil slumbers by the discord of the rebel gongs; and as he might have said himself, he seemed to be "blue-moulded for want of the bating he was very likely to get."

But if Rafferty's demeanour surprised her, she was still more astonished by the behaviour of Mr Briggs. The little man had as little *amour propre*; and when she told him, with some hesitation, of the important arrangements she had made without consulting him, he had not stood for a moment on his dignity as nominally the deputy-governor. So, as the best of women might do, she of course took advantage of his weakness, and simply gave him something like peremptory orders to come under the shelter of the Residency.

"As it is to be a sort of inner citadel of the defence, Mr Briggs, you will be safe there, if you are safe anywhere."

Had a crushed worm turned under her slipper, and speaking like the ass of the prophet, expostulated against being trodden upon, she could scarcely have been more taken aback than when Briggs showed a will of his own, and determination.

"You have taken over the charge of the Settlement and the Residency, Miss Moray, and I do not blame you. You may be more competent than I am, and I dare say you may have as good a right. I see that you can do much with Matusin and his Malays, and therefore I said nothing. But your father at least left the cash-box and the state papers in my charge, and no fear of consequences shall induce me to be parted from them."

"But why should you, Mr Briggs?" exclaimed Grace, greatly touched. "I ought to have considered your feelings more, perhaps, but I had no idea you felt so strongly. You can bring the money and the papers with you, you know: they will be safer in the Residency than anywhere else."

"Pardon me again, madam," said the little gentleman, by no means soothed, and with more formality than before. "Even if I could find trustworthy bearers to transport what money there is—and much of it is in silver, and consequently bulky—the papers are in the fire-proof safe that Colonel Chamberlain ordered out from Cannon Street. It is built into the brickwork, and it is out of the question moving it."

"Of course; but my father has left you the key, I suppose. Bring the papers to the house here, and we can bury the money in the garden."

"As it is probable that there will be a conflagration in the Set-

tlement to-day or to-morrow, the place of those important papers is in Chubb's patent fire-proof safe. Should they perish there, I cannot help it; and I think the Malays will have trouble in picking the lock. Should they be lost or destroyed elsewhere, I should be justly held responsible. Ah, miss," went on the little man, as he warmed up, "you thought I was a coward, not worthy of a word or a thought; and so perhaps I may be. You might have thought still worse of me had you known 'all the misery I have gone through from the sound of those abominable gongs. But I do know my duty; I know how I earn my salary, and my place is by the safe and the cash-box. The Malays may tear me limb from limb, or burn me at a slow fire, as they have done to better men on smaller provocation; at least I shall die at my post, and you shall see that a clerk may be a martyr."

"And a hero, Mr Briggs," returned Grace, with a smile that went to his heart, through the tears that wellnigh blinded her. "One thing is, that should you die as you say, none of the rest of us will be left to mourn for you. But if we live, as I believe we shall, and see brighter days, be sure that I for one shall do justice to your heroism."

In such a state of things suspense could not be greatly prolonged; and it was just as well, since human nerve-power has its limits. That afternoon Grace's spirits involuntarily fell: excitement was sinking down into intense depression. So it was more or less with the rest of the Europeans; for the heavens and the very air seemed pregnant with ominous portents. The murky atmosphere had been thickening all the day, and by the evening

was overcharged with electricity. Black banks of clouds, gathering over the sea, had been shifting inland, till the bright sky was hidden behind a lowering canopy, which seemed to rest on the tops of the tallest cocoa-nut palms. Sea-birds had been floating landward with the clouds, either flying low in the unnatural silence, or occasionally uttering a plaintive cry. The air was hot—hot—and as yet there was no sign of rain; and those who watched the signs of the weather would have welcomed the threatened deluge, were it only to draw away impending conflagration, for it seemed as if one spark might set everything in a blaze.

The fire came before the water. Grace, wandering between her rooms and the verandah like a restless spirit, dropped involuntarily into the nearest chair, and covered her eyes with her hands; while her maid, though used to tropical thunderstorms, was sending out shriek on shriek. The strange stillness had been suddenly broken by a roar over the roof of the Residency, as if several tons of dynamite had exploded right over the thatch. The deafening peal, if peal it could be called, which sounded like the simultaneous discharge of the world's parks of artillery, was accompanied, rather than preceded, by a blinding blaze of light, that flashed home to her brain through shut eyes and crossed fingers. Then after that appalling salvo, the cannon of the heavens began to play, in dropping discharges at irregular intervals; and once, confused as she was, she could distinctly distinguish the crashing and shivering of timber on the lawn under the windows. How long she sat, with swimming brain, in the prostration of terror

and soul-mastering awe, she never knew. She was roused from her stupor by Rafferty bursting into the room, without going through the ceremony of knocking—though indeed, had he opened the door with a grenade, it could hardly have made much difference. Nor was the appearance of that faithful follower calculated to reassure her. The devil-may-care Irishman was pale as death, and muttering invocations to the Blessed Virgin. Still the presence of the man helped to bring her to herself. She found strength to stand upon her trembling limbs; and reaching out a hand to seize his arm, she staggered back to the verandah. After all, as she tried to tell herself, she had never been afraid of English thunder; and were it not for nerves that had been painfully overstrained, she would not have been frightened now. At another time indeed, and had her father's arm been around her, she might have admired the tremendous magnificence of the spectacle. One moment there was a black darkness that might be felt; the next, the veil would be rent as by the mighty hand of the Invisible and Omnipotent, and the lacery of each leaf and twig stood out in a lurid illumination that might have come from Hades, or from anywhere between heaven and hell. And as she stood and gazed and trembled, after a wilder peal a brilliant meteor, shooting swiftly across the night, pitched under a mighty areca-tree on the lawn, and seemed to *ricochet* in rippling electricity over the river.

"May God be good to us all!" ejaculated Rafferty, through chattering teeth; and then, remembering that he was the sworn champion of the lady who still leaned on him, he went on—"Not that wan of me cares much; and after

all is said and done, miss, them devils outside will never stir in this weather. May the saints forgive me for spaking of devils!"

As if in answer to him, a preternaturally long lull was broken by sounds that seemed insignificant to those that had gone before; and yet they were ominous of a more terrible danger. There came a clashing of the gongs and a shouting of war-cries from the Malay posts; and as the clamour would occasionally sink and fall, Grace fancied she could hear them answered from the distance by something like faint echoes.

Mr Rafferty had no doubt on the matter. The wild Irishman had sharp ears; and now that he realised a danger that was material and tangible, Richard was himself again.

"I spoke too soon, miss—and just like me! I might have known the devils would be at home, and abroad too, in their own particular element of fire and sulphur. Luckily, there's little to choose between our friends and them, and our niggers have got the stockades and the guns before them. Anyhow, it is high time I was laving you."

"But your place is in the house here, Rafferty."

"And so I will be in my place when the attack comes this way; but in the meantime, the fun is up the river, and Mister Mathieson may have his hands full. I'll just lave Jackson in charge, and be back again, if need be, in a pig's whisper."

"You are right; we must show ourselves to the Malays at first. Nay, it is no use your objecting; I am going with you to Matusin. I can come back with you."

Rafferty lost no time in protesting, as a more prudent and responsible individual might have done. He felt, besides, that protests would be idle—and there he was

right. Miss Moray was submissive to her father, but would have her way with everybody else. In five minutes they had given certain directions; they had crossed the lawn, and Rafferty had handed the lady into a boat. Pulling steadily against the stream, in lightning that lighted the clear water to its depths, in five minutes more they surprised the Malay chief. His admiration of the heroic English girl was extreme, though he had little leisure to express it. As his eyes lighted up to give her a welcome, Grace felt that her visit had been well-timed. It was certain that the Malays would fight more stanchly for having seen that she exposed herself to danger with indifference. But all the more easily she yielded to the joint expostulations of the chief and Rafferty, and withdrew to the shelter of a hut on a little rising ground in the rear of the attack and defence. Thence, from a "front place" beneath a cluster of feathering palms, she could see all that was to be seen.

Not that what was to be seen was much. There was "more cry than wool," more noise made than damage done. The opposing forces, separated by the fallen trees and the impervious jungle, exchanged provocations and missiles, without the possibility of coming to close quarters.

"Ach, sure, thin," remarked Rafferty, who had come back to her in disgust, "for all the fine show they made, coming out in the thunder, they are but braggarts after all. It was not worth turning out, with the chance of getting wet to the skin, to see nothing more than a solitary nigger with a spent musket-ball in his instep. They can be no great captains that are against us; and I'd back Mister Mathieson against them any day."

As to putting his money on Mr Matusin, Rafferty might have been right; but he had underrated the strategy of the beleaguering forces. Though the noisy attack was kept up, he escorted Miss Moray back to the Residency. The storm had pretty well passed over, and the danger seemed to have passed with it. Breathing a heartfelt prayer of gratitude for a double escape from danger, she sank back into the chair she had quitted some hours before, and ordered her servants to provide Rafferty with refreshments.

Prayers can never be misplaced, but the form of this one was rather premature. I do not think I have dwelt before on the topography of the town of Sanga; but it may be mentioned now that the Residency had been built rather with an eye to commercial advantages and beauty of situation than to strategical considerations. Sanga, in fact, was meant for a trading town, not for a fortress; and the Residency stood on a reach of the river, in a receding back angle of the stockaded works. It was surrounded by lawns, by gardens and orchards; and beyond, the jungle came nearly up to the stockades. It is true that the jungles were so thick that they might have been regarded as an additional protection, even against such assailants as the Malays of those forests.

Grace, then, was lying back in her chair, and Rafferty, after having apologised for the familiarity with an indifferent assumption of bashfulness, had begun vigorously to handle a knife and fork, when the young lady, doomed to an ascending gamut of sensations, sprang a second time out of her seat. This time it was no noise from the heavens that she heard; the sound seemed rather and unmistakably to come from the opposite quarter.

The beleaguering chiefs having assured themselves of the difficulty of forcing the abattis, had ordered a feigned attack on it. The real onslaught was to be directed against two other places, and one of these was the Residency. But if there are miscalculations in the combinations of scientific warfare, barbarians are still more likely to miss connections. The force that was to "swarm up" to the Residency was made up of men from three mutually jealous tribes. One of the bands had gone astray; a second had been brought to a deadlock in a sylvan *impasse*; and the third, in their pride and triumph at having arrived, had forgotten all their savage sagacity and prudence. They had reached the stockade, and were scrambling over it unobserved, when the foremost of them began to whoop and to halloo. The untimely demonstration gave the alarm to a native guard who had been bivouacked between the Residency and its outworks. The friendly Malays, seizing their weapons, fell hastily back upon the house, which had been provisionally fortified against the probabilities of disaster. So that the natives, backed up by the European reserves, were ready to make a good fight of it under cover.

Yet the assailants were so audacious, and so reckless of their lives, that they might have made their way into the house notwithstanding a stubborn defence. They crept forward, through bushes which ought to have been cut down, to the very foot of the balconies. More than one of them actually tried to

climb the pillars which supported the verandahs of the first floor. Grace, peeping downwards through the jalousies, looked down into fiercely gleaming eyes and rolling white eyeballs. Then the eye would be eclipsed, as a death-shot or a stab from above struck the owner; and he would disappear with a dull thud in the dimness, rolling backwards in the agonies of death. But the attack was not effectually repulsed till Rafferty set himself seriously to direct the fire of a rocket-tube. Then the natives were seized with such superstitious terrors as they had never experienced through the worst of the storm. They shrank back from these missiles, which seemed to follow them and search them out like sentient beings, through the very labyrinths and intricacies of the jungle. There was a panic and a "save who can," and the onslaught for the time was a failure. When day broke on the battle-ground, nothing was to be seen but a few fallen and mangled bodies, some of them still breathing. But Grace's sense of comparative security was sadly shaken, and she felt that when the attack was again renewed on the Residency, she would be in the very forefront of the battle. Nor was it only or chiefly for herself that she feared. Should her letter have miscarried, or should her father miss the messengers, returning with the weak force he had started with, he might run unconsciously into the arms of the enemy. Nothing, indeed, was more likely; yet what could she do but pray, and strive to hope?

HELEN FAUCIT.

THIS beautiful volume, the main portion of which from time to time brightened the pages of 'Maga,' will waken a host of stirring memories in those who had the good fortune to see the heroines of which it treats clothed with life by its gifted authoress. For thousands she opened up a world of poetry before undreamed by them—filled their eyes with visions of beauty and grace and dignity, living yet ideal; and by her delineations of all that is best in womanhood, woke up feelings which, but for the magic touch of her genius, might have slumbered all unknown. At the same time, she won her way to the hearts of all by a gentleness and sweetness of aspect and demeanour, that spoke of the modesty and absorption of the true artist, who thought only of the work it was given to her to do, and was filled with humble gratitude for the power which enabled her to show to the eyes and ears of her audience, with all the charm of breathing passionate life, the beings whom our great dramatic poets had imagined.

How well does the present writer, then a girl, remember the series of memorable nights on which she first saw Helen Faucit on the Dublin stage! How well, too, does she remember the enthusiasm which the young actress aroused in all the ablest men, and, no less markedly, in all the accomplished women in which Dublin society was then rich! They were all at her feet; and off the stage, she moved among them with a quiet, unconscious grace, that

deepened the enthusiasm which grew there night by night, as she placed before them some fresh illustration of her remarkable powers. And what a list was hers! Scarcely less memorable than her Juliet, her Constance of Bretagne, her Hermione, her Rosalind, or her Lady Macbeth, were her Isabella in the "Fatal Marriage," and her Belvidera in "Venice Preserved." Of the two latter parts we have more than once heard the leading Dublin physician of the day say, that they showed the phases of insanity, in the gradual coming on of madness in Isabella, and the sudden giving way of the brain in Belvidera, with a truthfulness that appalled him, all the more that he knew well it was no imitation of what the actress had seen, but the unconscious development, out of intuitive sympathy with the conditions which the poet had imagined, of phenomena which he, the experienced physician, had observed in the course of his profession. So it was, that some years afterwards, when Miss Faucit appeared as the blind Iolanthe in "King René's Daughter," we have heard those who had made the manner and movements of the blind the study of their lives, profess their amazement that the deportment and action of the actress were so completely those of a blind girl, that they seemed as if they had been the result of years of observation. This it was known they were not; for it was notoriously Miss Faucit's creed that, if an actor's imagination does not enable him to portray the phenomena

of mental or physical defects, the study of such defects from life will produce results feeble in themselves and incompatible with the freedom of true art.

It was hard to say whether in those days we women or the men were most in love with Helen Faucit. The women were all gratitude to her for the noble pictures of her sex which they owed to her. The men were, no doubt, animated by a more mixed feeling, and by not a few of them we were reminded of Goethe's words—

“Wen Helena paralyzirt,
Der kommt so leicht nicht zu Ver-
stande.”

Who could wonder at this, who came under the charm of that most gracious nature? We see by Mr Browning's lines, quoted in the appendix to this volume (p. 426), how strongly he felt it:—

“‘Genius’ is a common story!
Few guess that the spirit's glory
They hail nightly—is the sweetest,
Fairest, gentlest, and completest
Shakespeare's-Lady's, ever poet
Longed for! Few guess this: I
know it.”

When we first saw Helen Faucit, she had recently returned from Paris, where she had been acting along with Mr Macready. A vivid idea of the impression she produced there is given in the passages quoted in the same appendix (p. 436) from the late M. Regnier, and from a very fine criticism by M. Edouard Thierry, formerly director of the Comédie Française, who, as we have reason to know, speaks to this hour of the performances of the young English actress as among the greatest triumphs of histrionic art which he has ever seen. In the best social circles of Paris, Miss Helen Faucit produced the same impression which we ourselves witnessed in Dublin. A distinguished

woman of letters says, in a recent letter to us: “There was a *soirée* at Madame Ancelot's, where all literary and diplomatic Paris was invited to meet Miss Helen Faucit. Guizot and Lady Byron were there, and people were much amused at Lady Byron's jealousy. She had expected to be the *lionne* of the *soirée*. I well remember Guizot's exclamation, as, on being introduced to Miss Faucit, he kissed the artist's hand, ‘*Mais c'est une enfant! c'est une enfant!*’ He could not conceal his surprise to see in the fair gentle girl before him the Lady Macbeth about whom everybody was raving, ‘almost a *pensionnaire*,’ as he afterwards said to me.” “How beautiful,” the writer adds, “she looked that night, with a drooping branch of frosted leaves and flowers in her hair!”

That the same actress, who had fascinated them in Ophelia, could awe them in Lady Macbeth, was obviously a revelation to the Paris critics. “On n'avait imaginé Ophelia,” wrote Edouard Thierry, “ni plus touchante, ni plus gracieuse. Notre parterre Français est demeuré surpris devant cette pantomime pleine de sens, pleine d'idées, pleine de bonté, pleine de tendresse, pleine de passion même, mais surtout pleine de mesure et pleine de modestie.” See again, how deep the impression made on a man so able to judge, so hard to satisfy, as the great actor and accomplished scholar Regnier!—

“Je n'ai jamais revu ou relu *Othello* ou *Hamlet* sans me rappeler ce que Lady Martin fût dans *Deedemona* et dans *Ophelia*: et toujours j'ai conservé dans mon esprit, comme un de mes plus frappants souvenirs dramatiques, la représentation où, pour la première fois (à Paris du moins) elle joua le rôle de Lady Macbeth. Elle sût y montrer une autorité, une maturité de talent, qui cadrait peu avec ses jeunes années,

et je fus heureux alors, comme il me semble qu'elle en dût être flattée, de lui voir recueillir des éloges si justes et si éclatants, tant de la part du public qui sent, que de la part du public qui juge."

Miss Faucit speaks (p. 292) with great warmth of the quick and intelligent sympathy of her Paris audiences, and with as great modesty of the encouragement she found in the criticism of Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, E. Thierry, Jules Janin, and others. The same correspondent from whom we have already quoted, furnishes us with a few interesting details of the sensation she produced upon some of them. "Alexandre Dumas," she writes, "who had expressed himself in most enthusiastic terms concerning the great genius of Helen Faucit, was extremely anxious to write a drama for her. The subject was to be the intrigue to prevent the marriage of the Duke of Orleans with the daughter of Charles I.—Henriette d'Angleterre—a rôle admirably fitted for Miss Faucit. Dumas, in his enthusiasm, once exclaimed in my hearing, 'There is not an actress on the French stage—no, nor yet amongst the great ladies of the Court—whose voice, look, and gesture could represent the royal princess so well as Helen Faucit. Her very tread is that of royalty.' You must remember that he did not understand a word of English; but he asserted that he could follow the artist through every phase of emotion by her wonderfully expressive play of feature alone. Strange to say, he could not be made to feel the smallest admiration for Macready; and would often say, when speaking of Miss Faucit's Desdemona, 'Oh, if she had but an Othello gifted with more passion and less precision than *ce brave* Macready.'

"The last time I ever saw Alexandre Dumas we talked of Miss Faucit, and the tears stood in his eyes as he recalled her Ophelia, and her farewell to the company in the mad scene—"Ah, madame, cette sortie! cette sortie! jamais je ne l'oublierai de ma vie.' He was not gifted with perseverance, as we all know, and yet he went to every performance, and could recount the emotions of every scene in which Miss Faucit appeared. 'Elle me fait rêver—elle m'inspire toujours des créations nouvelles!' was the reason he gave to his friends, who wondered at what they called the *bonhomie*, with which he would spend whole evenings in listening to what he could not understand.

"Amédée Pichôt, who was considered the first French critic of his day, mentions in one of his works that he was entirely inspired by Miss Faucit's acting to undertake the translation of Shakespeare conjointly with Guizot—a translation, the greater part of which was the work of Pichôt, to whom the reputation and the emoluments resulting from the translation were a matter of comparatively no moment.

"The Paris public were most of all moved by Miss Faucit's performance of Lady Macbeth, and it certainly was one of the grandest things I ever beheld. The whole conception was new to the critics. The reading of the letter first claimed attention, and became the cause of controversy. I rather think it was Madame Émile Girardin, in her husband's journal, who gave the most popular account of the performance. The last time I ever saw her at her own house, she spoke of the Lady Macbeth; and described the retiring from the banquet scene, when Lady Macbeth leads Macbeth from the

table, but never once looking at him, turning aside her head, as if in dread of meeting his glance. "What a splendid inspiration! No French actress would ever have thought of that," she exclaimed; and she then attempted to imitate the wonderful grace with which Miss Faucit bent her neck. "Quelle grâce, et surtout quelle souplesse!" she exclaimed. "Jamais nous n'avons eu cela ici!" And then she went on to speculation—whether Shakespeare had inspired Miss Faucit, or whether Miss Faucit would have inspired Shakespeare with the movement, had she been consulted.

"One more reminiscence! Jules Janin's indignation at Macready's standing before Miss Helen Faucit during the appeal made by Desdemona to the Senate, so that with his ample velvet robe he completely hid the beautiful kneeling figure behind him. I remember that Jules Janin called him, in his review of the performance in the 'Débats,' "Ce grand *paravent* de Macready." The petty manœuvre was at once detected by the French critics and exposed. I remember her dresses as Desdemona were highly praised, and declared to be the correct historical costume.

"Juliet was played but once by Helen Faucit in Paris. It produced a sensation almost surpassing that of her Lady Macbeth. My own remembrance of this one performance is that of a dream, exquisitely beautiful, harmonious as that produced by a sublime piece of music,—the attention so rapt by each melody, that the impression *left* by the whole is a vision of entrancing beauty, such as must be produced by *haschisch*. Of course Alexandre Dumas, with his exuberant eloquence, failed not to express his enthusiasm by recounting with dramatic fervour

the effect produced upon his nervous system by the *whispered* potion scene, which he described as a souvenir of the ancient Greek drama.

"Great regret was expressed when the English company departed; but no record is left in French literature of the name of Macready, while that of Miss Faucit became familiar to every reader. I forget the name of the critic who prophesied that no attempt would ever be made to produce a Shakespearean play at the Théâtre Français after Miss Faucit's visit. This prophecy has proved correct. All translations have appeared at the Odéon, the Ambigu, and other secondary theatres."

These reminiscences bring vividly before us the nights when we hung on every movement, on every sentence, of the young actress who had come among us, "with gifts and graces eminently adorned," fresh from, but wearing most meekly, her Paris triumphs. In her were combined all the physical requisites for her art,—a person beautifully moulded, whose every motion was grace; a voice fascinating "in its most silver flow," yet full of resonance and power to meet the largest demands of passion or emotion; a face on which every fleeting mood of feeling seemed to cast its shadows and its lights, true, infinitely varied, and spontaneous in its expression, realising to us Bacon's description of that "best part of beauty, which a picture cannot express, no, nor the first sight of the life." We speak of the year 1845, when Miss Faucit added to her triumphs the impersonation of Antigone, and proved, as George Fletcher in his 'Studies of Shakespeare' has well said, that the "women of old Greece were not framed of marble, but of sensitive, imaginative, and impassioned, as

well as intellectual and heroic, flesh and blood." How she looked at this time, De Quincey, who saw her Antigone in Edinburgh, has told us :—

"Suddenly, O heavens! what a revelation of beauty! forth stepped, walking in brightness, the most faultless of Grecian marbles, Miss Helen Faucit, as *Antigone*. What perfection of Athenian sculpture! the noble figure, the lovely arms, the fluent drapery! What an unveiling of the ideal statue! Is it Hebe? Is it Aurora? Is it a goddess that moves before us? Perfect she is in form: perfect in attitude—

'Beautiful exceedingly,
Like a ladye from a far countrie!'

It flattered one's patriotic feelings to see this young countrywoman realising so exquisitely, and restoring to our imagination the noblest of Grecian girls."

Pity that De Quincey did not see and describe to us Helen Faucit's appearance in the "*Iphigenia in Aulis*" of Euripides, which in the following year made all Dublin wild with admiration. A thrill of delight used to vibrate through the audience, as robed in a "light cymar" fretted with silver, and wearing a wreath of blush roses, she entered, as the betrothed of Achilles, on the car by the side of her mother Clytemnestra. But the hushed silence that always followed Miss Faucit's entrance on the scene grew intense, as the passionate pleading of *Iphigenia* to her father to spare her life rolled on with that beautiful articulation in which not a syllable was lost, while every word seemed the spontaneous utterance of the moment. Dublin audiences were then very noisy upon occasion, and the Lord Lieutenant's nights, or the manager's benefit, were always seized on for a free expression from the galleries

of native wit and boisterous spirits. On one such night we remember "*Iphigenia in Aulis*" was given. Not much of the play could be heard for the noise; but the moment Miss Faucit came on the stage stillness reigned, and the gallery, like the rest of the house, "listened like a three years' child," and not a cadence of her beautiful voice was lost. We all, the roughest as well as the highest, revered the woman as much as we admired the actress.

Again, can we ever forget of what the silent acting, for which Helen Faucit was always pre-eminent, was capable, as shown in the statue scene of "*The Winter's Tale*"? It was all that Shakespeare in the moment of inspiration could have imagined.

"O royal piece,
There's magic in thy majesty,"

says Leontes; but there was something far beyond this majesty in the saintly calm of a face in which might yet be read the long anguish of those sixteen years of seclusion, in which Hermione had mourned the jealous madness of Leontes and the loss of her child. No one could wonder at the feeling which prompted Perdita's words :—

"Give me leave,
And do not say 'tis superstition, that
I kneel, and then implore her blessing."

She looked so like a thing "enskied and sainted," that this seemed the natural voice of us all. And when she moved and descended from the pedestal, every heart beat quick, as if a miracle had been wrought, and some being from a purer sphere had come before us. Then who may describe the inexpressibly touching beauty of look and voice as, turning from Leontes to Perdita, she said—

"You gods, look down
And from your sacred vials pour your
graces
Upon my daughter's head?"

It was from such performances as these that we learned the truth of Madame de Staël's words, where she says, in her 'Germany': "What words are capable of painting the emotions of the soul like an accent, a gesture, a look? Words tell less than accent, accent less than physiognomy, and the inexpressible is precisely that with which a great actor brings us acquainted." And now we see from the little autobiographical sketches scattered through Lady Martin's volume, what a richly endowed and beautiful nature went to the accomplishment of such great results, just as we see in the portraits with which the volume is enriched, the earnest, dreamy, imaginative girl expanding into the woman, into whose face has passed the expression of a life devoted to meditation on the problems, not of art only, but of human life. It would be out of place to say more of the studies of Shakespeare's women which the book contains, than that they are a contribution of the highest value to the best criticism of his work. Rather shall we try to convey some idea of what Helen Faucit made of these women upon the stage. In doing so, we shall not take them in the order in which she has placed them, but will first notice the comedies, leaving Juliet, Desdemona, and Ophelia to the end. For, like many of the greatest tragic actors—Garrick, Talma, and Iffland, for example—Helen Faucit excelled in comedy, and showed that lively sense of humour which is never greater than in natures of the finest sensibility. In her it was always tempered by womanly grace and by a certain

distinction of manner amid the gayest ebullitions of a sportive fancy.

In none of her impersonations, probably, was this quality more conspicuous than in her Rosalind. As she came before us at first in her sad and subdued beauty, suffering under her uncle's growing jealousy and mistrust, we saw little to prepare us for the brilliant creature of the forest scenes. Her whole aspect was that of one whose ardent nature has been softened by sorrow and wrong. But when Orlando entered upon the scene, her attention became gradually riveted upon him, and we were made to feel that the sweet poison of love at first sight had already begun its work. Her eyes followed the speakers, as they warned Orlando of the risk he ran in an encounter with Charles the wrestler. But the first sign of her emotion was when, taking a chain from her neck, and stealthily kissing it, she said in a tremulous voice, "Wear this for me!" adding with sad gentleness—

"One out of suits with fortune,
That could give more, but that her hand
lacks means."

We can never forget the tender grace of Miss Faucit's manner, or the penetrating tones of her voice as she added—

"Sir, you have wrestled well, and
overthrown
More than your enemy."

In the next scene, when she has to encounter her uncle's wrath and is banished, the high spirit and inherent dignity of Rosalind were expressed with a calm consciousness of power, that revealed the native princess, and showed what hidden strength of character and will lay under that gentle exterior. But it was in the forest's scenes, where Rosalind's nature

expands in the enjoyment of her new-born liberty, that Helen Faucit's triumphs chiefly lay. She took us with her into that dream-land "exempt from public haunt," where everything is "As you like it," and dispelled all sense of its unreality by the strong human feeling and the exuberant joyousness of a deep but happy love, that diffused an atmosphere of "brightness as holy as the shadows" of its melancholy boughs.

We lately saw these forest scenes as presented by "The Pastoral Players" in the beautiful glade of Combe Wood. It was like watching a glorious landscape in some "delightful land of faerie," with figures drawn into it by Nicolo Poussin. The effects were magical of the afternoon sun, now casting broad bands of shadow, now bathing the scene in a golden light, then lighting up here and there the faces of the happy creatures, who were "fleeting the time carelessly as they did in the olden world," their songs mingling with those of the birds that flashed through the sunlit leaves. It was Shakespeare informed by Nature. How strange the contrast seemed, as we thought how Helen Faucit, with only the common accessories of the stage around her, filled the imagination with far richer pictures! Then it was more like Nature informed by Shakespeare; for actress and poet together led the spirit into a land of greater beauty, and woke the poetic sense to finer issues.

What a series of pictures passed before us as she moved to and fro, in a page's dress of lavender cashmere, edged with emerald green velvet, that set off her symmetrical form to the greatest advantage, her hair falling in natural loose curls upon the shoulders, from under a broad felt hat, with a hawthorn

spray or some stray wild flower twined into its band! The effect was exquisite, when in some sudden movement of joyousness in her scenes with Celia, this hat would slip back, and hang suspended by its ribbon. The figure of the youth, in the tender grace of every attitude, in the classic head, the broad-brimmed hat slung behind, reminded one of the figures of Hermes on some antique bas-relief.

Among the countless passages of idyllic beauty that leap to the memory, none are more prominent than the incidents of the scene of the mock marriage. How delicious to the audience, who were in her secret, was the spirit of "happy heart," and the keen sense of the humour of the situation, when she exclaimed to Orlando, "Come, woo me!" and when he hung back, half amazed, half shy, said, with deepened emphasis, and a face radiant with enjoyment, "Woo me, for now I am in a coming-on disposition, and like enough to consent!" Then the gaiety, with an under-note of strong feeling, with which the actress led on to the joining of the lovers' hands, the head slightly averted, as Orlando said, "I take thee, Rosalind, for wife!" —the face that told, who might say how, that this was no jest to Rosalind, —the voice deepening almost to pathos, as she said, "I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband!" Then the brief pause of silence, broken by the outburst of that marvellous series of flashes of mingled wit, sarcasm, raillery, and pathos, in which Rosalind hides the emotions of perfect happiness that fill her heart almost to bursting. Ah, that words might fix on paper the impressions that Helen Faucit made upon us in that scene! We did not seem to have known our Shakespeare until she showed to us how truly he had

plumbed the depths of woman's nature, and the grace and fascination which a spirit so "bright and good" could infuse into the poet's text!

It was well said by Mr Herman Merivale that he believed "Shakespeare wrote the part of Rosalind in a prophetic dream for Helen Faucit." It was she, certainly, who first showed upon the stage the infinite variety and beauty of nature which underlies the poet's conception. It will need another Helen Faucit before this can be shown to a new generation. But when may we hope again to see the airy grace, the youthful elasticity, the high breeding which made that impersonation so irresistibly attractive? Or who will recall the inexpressible charm of her look and manner, when Rosalind resumed her woman's dress, and all the woman's sweetness and refinement and subdued playfulness, as she spoke the epilogue, and left upon the heart a feeling like that of a strain of the sweetest music?

In this, as in all Helen Faucit's personations, it was insensibly felt that a whole life of meaning and of possibility lay below the surface. Whatever the character, you realised the noble woman behind. It was this, for example, which lifted her Lady Teazle into the highest region of comedy. In a letter of George Eliot's (2d March 1874), she says of it to a friend—"I heard the tones, the rich laughter of Beatrice again yesterday, from Lady Teazle, and lost no syllable. Some little sadness mingled itself with the charm of her bearing and the music of her movements. It was that the refinement and elevation which they gave to comedy, often beyond the vision of the writer, should be felt by us to be unique and without visible sign of spreading for the

general benefit—that deep benefit which comes from seeing a high type of womanly grace, to shame away false ideals." In much the same spirit George Henry Lewes, writing of Helen Faucit's Rosalind, says:—

"All playgoers will remember how perfectly that fine actress can represent the joyous playfulness of young animal spirits, without once ceasing to be poetical. The gaiety of a serious nature, even in its excitement, must always preserve a certain tone, which distinguishes it from the mirth of unimpassioned natures; a certain ground-swell of emotion should be felt beneath. The manner may be light, but it should spring from a deep nature."

It was this quality which gave to this lady's Beatrice its peculiar distinction. She tells us the character had not the same attraction for her as Rosalind. Nevertheless, the elasticity and high-bred ease of Helen Faucit were never seen to greater perfection than in this character. The spirits that ran away with the tongue, but never with the manner; the wit that coruscated round her lover, was that of one who never for an instant lost her distinction and high bearing. Here, as in Rosalind, the heart of the true woman appeared through all the effervescence of humour; and when the right chord was struck, there came forth a pathos which perfected the conception. The whole impersonation was suffused with that undefinable charm, neither to be measured nor described, which informs the highest efforts in all art. The undercurrent of a sympathetic earnest heart beneath the rich laughter of this transparent soul, deepened the poetry of a passage such as that in which she answers Don Pedro when he says, "Out of question, you were born in a

merry hour!" "No, sure, my lord, my mother cried!" These words were uttered with tender intonation; then, throwing back her head, and pointing upwards, like a bird that soars and sings, she added, "But then there was a star danced, and under *that* was I born!" Another delicate touch of feeling occurred in the passage where Beatrice gives full career to her laughing abhorrence of matrimony, comparing the marriage state to a dance, every movement in which Helen Faucit suggested with inimitable grace, adding at the close, "And then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sink into the grave." This conclusion fell upon the ear in sadder tones and with measured rhythm, as if we beheld a pendulum swing slower and slower to the end of its period.

Again, the artist's exquisite fancy was shown at the moment when Beatrice falls into the snare laid for her by her friends, and Hero says—

"For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference."

Her imagination grasped the poet's image of the lapwing, and with the full command that she enjoyed of a lithe, elastic figure, she was able to carry out the simile in her motion. With head bent low, and arms slightly raised to catch her thin lace mantle, lifted by the summer breeze, she flitted towards the pleached bower where honeysuckles, symbols of her own loving, wayward heart, "though ripened by the sun, forbid the sun to enter."

This scene is the turning-point of Beatrice's life. She learns that she is loved, and all that is gener-

ous in her nature bids her listen to the heart which she now believes appeals to hers. But that which showed most delicate power in the actress was her by-play while listening to the story of Benedick's devotion. We watched with delight the signs by which she manifested the transition from the thoughtless girl to the thoughtful woman. First surprise, then incredulity, then we seemed conscious of a deeper agitation—a tightening of the heart and shock to the whole being, as Beatrice realised her own cruelty; her shame and bitter self-reproach up to the moment when the speakers have passed, and she came forth amazed, saying, "What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?" &c.

In the chapel scene Helen Faucit rose to her full force. Here she held the audience spell-bound, only to burst forth into one great cheer at the end. The strong alternations of feeling through which she passed, from deep resentment, scorn, sympathy, pity, love, were all depicted with profound feeling, till at the very climax of her passion, when she exclaimed, "Kill Claudio!" her voice, earnest, thrilling, wonderful, seemed to shake the whole audience to their depths.

Very different was the treatment of the whole of this chapel scene, as we remember it in the Dublin theatre, from what we have since seen in London. In Helen Faucit's Beatrice there was no light love-making with Benedick upon the altar-steps, and within the storied arches of a great cathedral filled with incense from the swinging censers of the choristers; no travesty of the sacred symbols of religion on the one hand, or falsifying of true love upon the other. The Beatrice Helen Faucit showed us

then had made up her mind, from the first moment of the base attack upon her cousin's honour, that Benedick must be Hero's champion if he was to be her husband. The dialogue that ensues—if we penetrate below the surface—is serious. Beatrice says the words, "It is a man's office, but not yours," as it were, tentatively, knowing that Benedick may think he cannot put himself forward, being neither kinsman nor in any way connected with Hero; and he, on his side, simply sets her doubts at rest by the words, "I do love nothing in the world so well as you." Helen Faucit's answer came slowly, "It were possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you," then with a quick gesture of natural embarrassment, "but believe me not;—and yet I lie not;—I confess nothing,—nor I deny nothing." The alternation of tenderness and archness made her delivery of this speech one of the most exquisite episodes in the play. The earnestness that underlies the whole scene, as so enacted, was in perfect harmony with the sanctuary in which the scene occurs. With the woman, it was the yielding of her whole self to the man she loved; with the man, it was the consecration of his life to her service.

"I have no misgivings," writes Lady Martin, "about the future happiness of Benedick and Beatrice. His home will, I doubt not, be a happy one—all the happier because Beatrice and he have each a strong individuality, with fine spirits and busy brains, which will keep life from stagnating. They will always be finding out something new and interesting in each other's character."

The truth of this lady's whole conception of the character is now so apparent, that we need to be reminded that Mrs Jameson, Haz-

litt, Campbell, and even Coleridge have read it in a very different spirit. To Campbell, Beatrice is an "odious woman." To Hazlitt, she seems a mere mocking bird. To Helen Faucit, as to Shakespeare, she is the Beatrice or the Blesser; her husband, the Benedictus or the Blessed.

The play of "The Merchant of Venice" drew out Helen Faucit's versatility even more than "Much Ado about Nothing." With this lady as Portia, the audience felt that they were in the presence of a great power, cultivated to its height,—a power which swayed their emotions at will like a magician, and showed them inner depths of their own natures, which otherwise would have remained a secret to themselves. The actress poured the wealth of her own rich and sensitive nature into the character of Portia. Here, as with Rosalind and Beatrice, in her very gayest moods, we felt that, *au fond*, there existed elements which, if need be, would make her either heroine or martyr. The character was felt to develop under the working of an inward law, that of a hidden but unchanging love.

Lady Martin tells us (p. 29) that she has always classed Portia with such women as Vittoria Colonna, the friend of Michael Angelo, and Cassandra Fedele, the poet-teacher of Venice; and who will say that in them the intellect, great as it was, surpassed the heart? In her acting, Helen Faucit gave us the first insight into Portia's secret in the sudden reticence of manner, and yet softening of voice, with which she uttered, "I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise," in answer to Nerissa's allusion to the scholar and soldier, who some time before had visited Belmont. Even in her voice before this, when she first ap-

peared upon the scene, we seemed to hear the yearning tones of hope deferred. When that germ of love had ripened to its fulness, its deepest and most touching accents fell upon the ear in the casket scene, and we can vividly recall the melodious plaintiveness with which she uttered the words—

"Let music sound while he doth make his choice."

Will this music prove her wedding hymn, or the swan-song of her dying soul?

In the whole of this casket scene with Bassanio, the by-play of the actress deserves to be recorded more faithfully and minutely than we can hope to succeed in doing. We seem still to see the upward gaze as of a St Cecilia, with which, in silent prayer, and with one knee scarce perceptibly dropped upon the cushioned footstool, she awaited the issue, and all the subsequent changes of expression that passed across her face during the selection of the caskets, to the final gleam of joy that lighted her countenance as her lover chose rightly. We felt how the too tumultuous passion had been chastened by that prayer. Subdued, yet intensely happy, she rose from her seat and awaited the approach of him who is now "her lord, her governor, her king."

Shortly after, the messenger enters with the letter which announces the calamity that has befallen Antonio. Here, again, the changes in Portia's face, as she watched her lover reading the letter, were a study, and there was a world of tender sympathy in her voice, as she said—

"Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?"

Then having read the letter herself, and having despatched Bassanio, with full means, to his friend's assistance, Portia's quick

intellect, as Lady Martin believes, discovers a loophole for escape in the wording of the bond. All her strength of will is roused, and Portia's resolution shapes itself into difficult and perilous action in carrying out her daring plot.

Thus we were led up to the great trial scene, when Helen Faucit's Portia appeared, not like a masquerader who assumes the manners of a barrister, but as a youth who never for one instant lost his tone of high breeding and earnest sense of the serious nature of the work he had in hand. The Jew was acknowledged to be in the right by the young doctor, who simply remarks, "therefore" he can afford to be—he "must be merciful." The rude answer, "On what compulsion *must* I? tell me that," was met with grave gentleness—

"The quality of mercy is not strained!"

Here we remember the delicate inflection of the voice, as it seemed faintly to rise on the word "strained," as if surprised at the thought that any strain or compulsion should be necessary. The memory of Helen Faucit's action and delivery of the rest of this sublime appeal will never, we are sure, pass from the minds of those who saw and heard her. How fine was the gradual ascent to that moment when, with eyes uplifted, she raised the covering from her head, as if in very deed she stood in the divine presence of Him whose attribute of mercy she extolled! She stood a moment in rapt silence, and each individual in the great audience held his breath; then bending down her pleading face, only to meet the hard miser's gaze, she uttered the words of solemn warning:—

"Consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for
mercy;

And that same prayer doth teach us all
to render
The deeds of mercy."

The high level reached in this speech was never lost throughout the scene that follows. When the earnest pleading with the Jew only developed the malignant ferocity of his purpose, the tone of the actress changed; and when in answer to her last appeal—

"Take thrice thy money; let me tear
the bond,"

he refuses, then with a quick gesture, imperceptible to those around, and just visible to the audience, Helen Faucit angrily struck the bond with her hand and became the judge. She knew that by Shylock's insistence on the letter of the bond she had him in her grasp, and her determination showed itself in the settled expression of her face and the severity of her tone. Helen Faucit was at pains to show, what seemed in all other representations we have seen to be forgotten, that the young doctor had no right to pronounce judgment on Shylock except by the authority and as the mouth-piece of the Ducal Court. While, therefore, the long dialogue between Antonio and Bassanio was proceeding, she used to approach the Duke and engage in conversation with him, as though explaining the view she had taken of the case, and receiving his sanction to the judgment she was presently to pronounce. When she returned to her place in the Court, she dealt Shylock blow upon blow with inexorable sternness. His own law was strictly measured out to him—

"Thou shalt have justice, *more than*
thou desirest."

There was something almost splendidly cruel in the way she said—

"He shall have merely justice and his
bond!"—

flinging that document at his feet as she spoke, with a curl on her lip of contemptuous scorn.

If in the character of Rosalind, Beatrice, and Portia we seem to find the finest qualities of womanhood gradually opening on our mind, the perfect chord is struck when we come to Imogen—a character in which Shakespeare seems to have illustrated the ideal which was in his heart when he wrote his Sonnet—

"Let me not to the marriage of true
minds
Admit impediment," &c.

How Helen Faucit entered into the very being of Imogen, is shown by her exquisite analysis of the character in this volume. Her impersonation of it from beginning to end was so complete in every detail, that it is difficult to single out passages for remark—each coming so naturally and spontaneously, and blending into a consummate whole. Still, as we write, we seem to see her as she first entered on the scene, the lovely and lovable form, clad in tunic and *peplum* of the most delicate colours, and softest, finest texture, falling around her in graceful folds as she stood "like a vine-tree winding upwards" in the embrace of her beloved Posthumus. Then, when we saw her again, and we have been told that she "weeps still," and only finds rest when her spirit encounters her husband in orisons—"for then she is in heaven for him"—how wonderful here, as again in Juliet, was the way in which Helen Faucit pronounced this one word "orisons"!

Anon Pisanio introduces Iachimo as "a noble gentleman of Rome who brings letters from her lord." Helen Faucit's by-play was exquisi-

site throughout this scene. First we saw her absorbed in "the scriptures of the loyal Leonatus," whose letter warms "the very middle of her heart." Then she hears words let drop by Iachimo, as he gazes intently upon her, which she cannot understand. On this came a moment of anxious curiosity, deepening to concern and pain, as she heard how her lord "laughs with free lungs" at her sex, and so on, by fine gradations, to the appealing look and gesture of agony with which she urges Iachimo to speak plainly:—

"Pray you,—
Since doubting things go ill, often hurts
more
Than to be sure they do; . . . discover
to me
What both you spur and stop!"

Then the whole expression of the face relaxed to one of utter desolation; and as the tempter counselled her to be revenged, Helen Faucit's features grew convulsed, her hands clenched, her whole frame collapsed, and seemed to shrink into itself as, bursting into tears, she cried—

"Revenged! how should I be revenged?
If this be true, how should I be re-
venged?"

But when the nature of the revenge counselled by Iachimo flashed upon her, and she instinctively read in one instant his character and purpose, the recoil was electric. Suddenly the cloud that had gathered round her passed away. She withdrew her hands from the tearful face, her depressed brow and drooping form were gradually raised, till she regained thorough clearness of countenance and firmness of figure, as she uttered her first cry for Pisanio. Then to what a height of grandeur she rose in the speech—"Away!

I do condemn mine ears," &c. There all the king's daughter, as well as the noble woman, spoke out in tones of such penetrating power as can never have been surpassed upon the stage. Again we saw Miss Faucit's acting in its finest aspect when, hearing Iachimo retract his words and apologise, she relaxed, saying slowly, simply, with quiet dignity—

"All's well, sir: take my power i'
the court for yours."

This courtesy on her part did not seem to us in the acting, as it did to George Fletcher and other commentators, to proceed from "the kind complacency of a generous forgiveness," but rather from the instinctive impulse of a high-bred woman, who will treat her inferiors, *not* according to their desert, but after her "own honour and dignity."

One of the most subtle pieces of acting we have ever seen was where Imogen, fretted by the attentions of the fool Cloten, first misses the bracelet, that "manacle of love" which her husband, in parting, had fastened on her arm. This little incident of the disappearance of an object which to her had been the symbol of the crowning bliss of her life, is only the beginning of sorrows, which reach their climax in the scene with Pisanio. The acting of Helen Faucit in this scene has been so carefully described by George Fletcher¹ that it would be impertinence to do aught but quote from him:—

"So far as violent revulsion of feeling can make it, so the passage where Imogen reads the letter from her husband commanding Pisanio to kill her is the most arduous of all in this diversified part. To have her joyful anticipation of the affectionate meeting with her beloved lord checked at

¹ *Studies of Shakespeare.* London: 1847—p. 100.

its height by a communication like this—what a shock of feeling for the actress to represent, with no more precise indication to guide her than Pisanio's exclamation—

'What, shall I need to draw my sword ?

—The paper

Hath cut her throat already !'

In expressing to us the stunning blow given to the adoring wife by the very first words, the staggering and faltering of her eye and voice, in sheer bewildered incredulity, until she comes to the murderous command, 'Let thine own hands take away her life ;' the fainting away of her accents at the close, under the withering conviction that her eyes have not deceived her, but that her calamity is real ; the sinking senseless to the ground ; and the hysterical revival ; in all these the actress has had nothing to direct her but her own instinct as to the true spirit of the character and the situation.

"The most nobly characteristic passages which she ought to deliver in this scene are, indeed, struck out, on the principle, no doubt, of indispensable saving of time, especially the grand one—

'Though those that are betray'd
Do feel the treason sharply,' &c.

But it is plain that she has studied them attentively, and so has raised her conception and expression of the heroine's character, as shown in this trying situation, to that noble elevation which the poet has so clearly indicated. She gives the true dignity of tone, as well as the true feeling, to every sentence—the pathetic indignation with which the slandered wife first repels the charge, the deep grief with which she feels herself compelled to retort it, and then the intensity of despair, *not the excess of mean, slavish submission*, which dictates that most affecting appeal—

'Come, fellow, be thou honest :
Do thy master's bidding.'

When Pisanio refuses to "damn his hand" with the bloody task, Imogen is only restrained from killing herself with his sword by the

thought of the "divine prohibition" against self-slaughter. There was a pathos never to be forgotten in Helen Faucit's action and tones, when, tearing open her dress that her bosom might receive the sword, Imogen reveals her husband's letters laid upon her heart, "The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus, all turned to heresy." In time this wise servant Pisanio succeeds in turning the current of her passion, till she perceives that there may be another and a nobler, though a harder course than *dying* for her love, and that is *living* for it. Living, till some clue at least be found to what is now all mystery and anguish.

And here we must turn for a moment from Helen Faucit the artist to Lady Martin the writer, and dwell upon the passage in which, with simple and earnest power, she shows us the brave woman on the mountain-top, surveying the wild hills—the plain—the ocean—in which her mission must commence, and sharing the great poet's faith in the

"Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

Our authoress points to the unseen hand that led the lonely sorrowing Fidele to her natural protectors, the brothers, who, by irrepressible instinct, at first sight were moved to love and cherish her.

With that poetic feeling which imbued the most minute detail in her impersonations with importance, Helen Faucit was careful so to array the page Fidele, that the slender form might show light against the dark background of the cavern. Clad in a page's dress of soft white cashmere, edged with pale blue, the figure well might seem to Arviragus and Belarius at first sight "a fairy," or,

"By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,
An earthly paragon! Behold divine-
ness,
No elder than a boy!"

Another beautiful passage in Lady Martin's writing is that in which she enlarges on the life in the forest cave. We see Fidele—great in trial as the Fidelio of Beethoven—turning the cave into a home, and filling its hollows with her angel-like singing; while grief and patience, both rooted in her heart, "mingle their spurs together."

This power in Imogen of rising above self in her sorrow, was indicated by Helen Faucit quite as fully in her joy; when at the end, sheltered once more upon her husband's breast, Imogen forgets herself, even at this crisis in her life, and turns, with affectionate grace, to those who had sheltered her in sorrow, and whom she now recognises as her brothers.

Space will not allow me to go into detail as to the quite marvellous by-play of this actress in the closing scene of this drama. It was all charming. The recognition of the ring that must have flashed as a star upon her eye—the recovery of the lost bracelet—the trembling anxiety with which she hears the opening of Iachimo's confession—the tenderly rapturous delight with which she learns her husband's fidelity—the elation—the piteous passionate emotion, which, as an ocean swell, breaks at last upon her husband's heart with the words—

"Why did you throw your wedded
lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock, and
now
Throw me again!"

"The play of 'Romeo and Juliet,'" Lady Martin writes, "instinct throughout with a vivid

dramatic life," is yet "a glorious hymn," "the noblest pæan to love ever written." There is perhaps no better test of the true inward inspiration of a work than this, that, from a certain point of view, it readily disembodies itself and becomes lyrical for us, without sacrifice of its distinctive form to this end. Throughout Helen Faucit's Juliet there was a sense of exquisitely modulated rhythm. Each tone in her voice, softened and deepened by the emotion within, found its own modulation. And even in the dread power of the potion scene, there was nothing discordant; a rhythmic law of nature, like that which governs the sea in its wildest moods, controlled each gesture, word, and look of her agonised condition.

As usual, Helen Faucit contrived in the first possible moment to indicate the birth of that passion, which is to be theme of the great work throughout. In the ballroom, the question—

"What's he that follows there that
would not dance?"

was uttered in the voice of one whose "life is set upon a cast."

In the balcony scene this voice, that had earned the child Juliet the name of "lady-bird!" was heard in its most silver flow. Then soul is interwoven with soul in joy so intense, that passion is purified by its own force, and fills the girl-woman with an energy that afterwards sustains her through her fearful trials.

We cannot attempt to describe Helen Faucit in this balcony scene, as we have often seen her, with just sufficient scenic accessories to complete the picture, whose centre was the sweet girlish figure, that to her lover's eye seemed as a "winged messenger from heaven." The reader must study for himself

the beautiful passage in Lady Martin's book where she works out her conception of this, which is the melody on whose theme the rest of the composition hangs, remembering the voice, the form, the tender expressive face she had at her command, through which her high ideal found its unforced utterance.

In the disasters that follow after the lovers' secret marriage, Juliet, slow, as all noble natures are, in understanding those who are morally their inferiors, turns to her nurse as her last domestic reliance. On receiving her answer, and still unable to realise that words so base could fall from any woman's mouth, Juliet asks—

"Speakest thou from thy heart?"

and the nurse answers—

"From my soul too;
Or else beshrew them both."

Then Juliet says—

"Amen!"

The soul's solitude was revealed in the changed and deepened voice in which this word was uttered.

Juliet took up the burden which henceforth must be borne alone. In the pale cheek, quivering lip, and far-off look we read the soul's consciousness of isolation and its effort to concentrate itself.

"In this supreme moment," writes Lady Martin, "she has formed her resolution." Then also, she believes (page 174), it was that Juliet remembers and possesses herself of the dagger, and adds, with calm resolution—

"If all else fail, myself have power to die."

That she will brave fate alone, and bear it with calm courage, was made manifest to us from the first moment of Helen Faucit's entrance into the Friar's cell. Her bearing, as she unexpectedly meets

the Count Paris there, had all the repose, the self-possession, and the undefinable interest that belong to a noble woman overmastering a secret sorrow. When she expanded on the Count's departure, it was to show the Friar the undaunted courage, in the face of death itself, of a woman who has consecrated her life to her husband.

There was no melodramatic flourishing of the dagger here, but quiet intensity and delicate taste, the result of which is a lasting image on the memory of a slender form, covered with a long black veil, a very type of calm resolve and heroic fortitude.

Juliet now returns to her chamber, having possessed herself of the phial containing the sleeping potion. She desires to be alone,

"For I have need of many orisons."

The ring of the sad voice in this word "orisons" still seems to vibrate on our ear.

It would be presumption to add anything to the description Lady Martin herself gives of the potion scene, except to assure her, that her own conception of it in all its awful grandeur was fully conveyed to her audience. She bound them with a spell-like awe, "shaking the listening soul in the suspended blood." Picturing to herself the horrors of a living tomb, Helen Faucit rose to an unsurpassed height of tragic grandeur. When she reached the vision of Tybalt's bloody festering form, the despairing utterance of the line—

"As with a club, dash out my desperate brains!"

and then the last cry—

"Stay, Tybalt, stay!"

seemed to electrify the audience with its power. A friend has placed in our hands a letter by

Westland Marston, in which he writes: "Of this scene I can only say that, if its commencement and progress were instances in their graphic and poetical truth of what Helen Faucit could *do*, its close was an instance of what she could *refrain* from doing, when fidelity and truth required. I refer to the exhaustion with which Juliet retired to the bed, instead of the ordinary climax when she takes the draught. I cannot tell you how I admired the self-denial of true art here."

Helen Faucit's acting, in the brief interview with the Friar in the tomb, was the consummation of all that went before. Wakening to find him, as she had been promised, at her side, her brain clear, her memory active, we heard the childlike silver voice again—

"O comfortable friar, where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be.
And there I am.—Where is my Romeo?"

He lies beside her, dead. All is over. She now buries the dagger in her own heart. Then, laying her face upon her husband's bosom, she raised his nerveless arms and folded them above her head. It used to bring Tennyson's *Fatima* to our mind:—

"I will grow round him in his place;
Grow, live, die, looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace."

In her conception of the character of Lady Macbeth, Helen Faucit showed the same originality and self-reliance as in that of Ophelia. The murderess, in her impersonation, was a fanatic, raised to take her place beside those medieval types of fanatic women, the Judiths and Jaels of Botticelli and of Sodoma. The Italian painters have displayed a profound

knowledge of character in their conception of the type of woman who was capable of such deeds, and yet could retain their people's love and reverence after its accomplishment. It is true, one sinned for the sake of her people's freedom, the other for that of a weak and selfish man; yet each voluntarily sacrificed all the womanly instincts rooted in her nature to steel her heart for the horrible act—to her, of all, most horrible.

Instead of a domineering, hard, and selfish woman, the Lady Macbeth of Helen Faucit was a wife, whose strongest passion is for her husband,—the weakness of whose character is supplemented by her indomitable will; and we well remember how this was conveyed to us, when, entering on her mission, she hears her husband's question, "If we should fail?" and answers with a quite sublime courage, regardless of all consequence, "*We fail.*"

The reader must study for himself the letter, in the appendix to this work, written by the celebrated Irish novelist, William Carleton, on this performance, to learn how the whole moral significance of this play was enhanced by this artist's conception; and if he has any experience of life, he will surely feel that tragedy depends for grandeur and for sorrow on the native character of the beings engaged in it,—the greater the capacity for good, the greater the sorrow of the fall.

Lady Martin tells us that she always played Lady Macbeth with reluctance. But, for our part, we regard her performance of this character as a most important chapter in the history of the drama. The highest art, it has been said, is the ideal representation of real emotion; and voice, look, and gesture are the actor's symbols, through which he makes emotion

intelligible. But is all emotion equally deserving of and capable of ideal representation? Do not nature and real life supply us with looks and gestures, which it is, or is not, the business of the artist to monumentalise? In the drama such typical moments occur in the performance of the actor, when the form and face are riveted for ever in the memory, fixed there as symbols of some great moral crisis in the human life which they express.

Three such pictures remain clear in our recollections of Helen Faucit's *Lady Macbeth*. In the first, beneath the spell of the weird sisters, she accepts her mission; in the second, we behold her failure; in the third, we see the moral retribution that has fallen on her sin.

Helen Faucit first appeared as the Thane's wife in her dark furlined robe—a white veil softening the outline of her head and shoulders. She advanced rapidly with the letter containing the witches' revelation in her hand, the heavy folds of her drapery sweeping in grand lines around her form. She stood in the front of the stage transfixed; the spell was upon her, the supernatural power of the weird sisters had begun its fatal work in her imagination. The hellish ecstasy became intense; and the voice of the actress communicated its electric influence to the audience, as she uttered the words, "Made themselves air, into which they vanished." Henceforth *Lady Macbeth's* lot was cast; she takes part with the spirits of evil, and sets to work upon their weary web.

Then follow the achievement and the failure in the dread banquet scene. The guests have hurriedly departed from the hall. For the first moment Helen Faucit remained standing, her figure bent

as she saluted the last guest; yet, from the moment that guest has retired, the subtle change from the courteous queen to the broken-hearted woman seemed to make itself felt in the bending form. The irrevocable cloud had settled on her bowed head. The husband she had loved and sinned for was enveloped in an impenetrable curse. She was simply hopeless. She staggered and grew faint; then tottered to a table and sat down, resting her forehead on her hand. In doing this she touched her crown, then lifted this symbol of her misery from her head for ever. She was the last to leave the banquet-hall. One moment's pause; then, turning her full face towards you, what did you see? The calm face of the Medusa—the face of despair so great, it cannot feel the stinging serpents by which her head is wreathed. No need to speak. As we looked at her, the words she had spoken in the scene, where she had first appeared as the queen, seemed to come back upon the ear, like the solemn chant of a Greek choragus:—

"Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content.

"Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy!"

In the third we reach the hour of retribution. Remorse has done its work. The wasted figure of the somnambulist, as if clad in the cerements of the grave, flitted upon the stage. Holding her arms apart, her eyes fixed on empty space, with a vacant sightless stare, she seemed as one who hangs upon a cross. Then came the desolate, hopeless sigh, the motion of the little hands no effort will wash clean—the blood-stained hands bearing the stigmata, not of a divine, but of a hellish master.

The following letter from one who had been a witness of her performance of this part, will be read with interest:—

"Nov. 5, 1864.—We all went to Drury Lane to see Helen Faucit in *Lady Macbeth*. I confess that I doubted her ability to perform this character, knowing how opposed to it all her own feelings must be, and that instead of being able to throw herself into the part, and identify it with her own nature, success must entirely depend upon the power of imagination unaided by sympathy of feeling, by *anything* in fact essentially herself, save the thought that her duty was to represent in Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth* a grand beacon to warn from crime. I scarcely know what I expected—but I know that I was amazed. She did not, as I half feared she might, impart any charm to the character. She gave it with a sort of weird majesty, extracting in the most marvellous manner from her countenance all its natural sweet tenderness, and replacing this with the stern cold determination suitable to the circumstances. In the sleep-walking scene the effect was magical, and it seemed as if no one even dared to breathe, so profound was the stillness in the overcrowded house as she glided in her ghost-like dress upon the stage, with eyes as if fixed on some horrible vision, and sightless to all else. The low dreamy tones of her voice, the long-drawn, strange, musical sigh, which seemed as if exhaling the miserable life's last breath, and the concluding scared whisper, half suffocated by horror, 'To bed, to bed, to bed,' as she disappeared, were wonderful in their thrilling tragic power."

Of the acting of the two other characters, *Desdemona* and *Ophelia*, treated in this volume, we are un-

able to speak, having never seen them impersonated by Helen Faucit. Of the *Desdemona*, we have often heard from those who were more fortunate, as full of the most moving sweetness and pathos. It took such strong hold of the audience, that it divided the interest of the play even with an *Othello* so fine as Macready's. Above all, by the impression of guileless innocence and wifely devotion, it brought out with piercing intensity the pathos of the tragic close. So, too, her *Ophelia*. We have already referred to the surprise expressed by a great Dublin physician at Helen Faucit's instinctive knowledge of the workings of mental disease, of its origin, development, and phenomena. That instinct, as we see from her analysis of *Ophelia's* character, guided her to the conclusion, that it was from her "close and subtle sympathy with him who was her very life," and who she had every reason to think had gone mad, that "she caught insensibly the infection of his mind's disease." Dr Conolly, whose life was spent in the study of the phenomena of insanity, has expressed the same view, in his study of "*Hamlet*" (London: 1863), and we remember to have heard of his delight, when he was told by Sir James Clark that Helen Faucit had arrived at the same conclusion. We have already cited M. Edouard Thierry's description of what her *Ophelia* was upon the stage. Another of her French critics, Amédée Pichôt, said of it, in the '*Révue Britannique*':—"Comme elle révèle tout ce qu'il y a de poésie dans la démente d'*Ophelia*. Dans ce dernier rôle, la pantomime, les expressions du visage, et les intonations de la voix en disent plus que les vers, et la prose de Shakespeare."

Helen Faucit could not have

been the great artist she was, but for her pure womanly nature and high cultivation. But she could never have given full expression to her conceptions without the aid of exceptional physical gifts. It may well be a subject of gratitude to her, that nature had given her a figure "more than common tall," lithe, pliable, graceful, majestic, as the character demanded; a head, classic, broad, and beautiful in outline; features, marvellous in their power of expression; eyes that had a darker or softer light for every change of emotion; and a voice that ranged from the most winning tenderness to the force and resonance of the most fervid passion.

In conclusion, we would observe that this artist's peculiar power lay in her consistent treatment of her subject as a whole, and in the poetic sentiment that pervaded her conception, even to the minutest detail of costume. With forethought and consummate judgment, she brought into harmony traits which in other hands might seem fitful and contradictory in the character, and rounded them to a perfect whole, so that there was a sense of harmonious development and noble unity throughout. With this intention, or perhaps in unconscious obedience to the purely artistic instinct, Helen Faucit, from the very first moment that she appeared upon the stage, contrived to touch the key-note to which she returned at the end of the drama,—leading us, as it were, through the changes of some great symphony, till we reached the fundamental theme once more. For instance, in "*Cymbeline*," when Imogen first appears with Posthumus, the imagery in her husband's words at the close of the play was antici-

pated in their attitude then; and the fair woman hung upon her husband as the ivy on the vine, which entwines the tree in its embrace. Her tree had bowed, but it had not broken, and at last she finds it rooted firm upon the rock. She is restored out of the wild storm that had parted them to the one heart, that says—

"Hang there, like fruit, my soul,
Till the tree dies."

So also, in *Romeo and Juliet*, we were struck in the first scene by the bird-like silver voice of the child Juliet. The sound had the clear ring of a heart as yet untouched by passion. We never heard the tone again, at exactly the same pitch, till it broke upon our ear in the last scene, when, awakening in the tomb, Juliet says—

"I do remember well where I should be.
And there I am."

The pathos of this effect, this repetition of the child-voice, was like the recurrence of a minor chord, whose vibrations have touched the heart in the beginning, and now pierce it at the close with a sensation of anguished sympathy.

We have already cited George Eliot's words of acknowledgment of Helen Faucit's genius, in the gratitude she expresses for "that deep benefit which comes from seeing a high type of womanly grace, to shame away false ideals." Here we see one great woman of the age approach another with her crown. Our gratitude is no less deep. How glad, then, should we feel if we have helped to place even one other leaf in the chaplet so honourably won!

A VISIT TO TSUSIMA: AN INCIDENT OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION.

THE principle upon which the foreign policy of England seems to have been based of late years is, that a war with any foreign Power is out of the category of possible events, and that to take ordinary precautions against the aggressive tendencies of our neighbours is to manifest an unjust suspicion towards them. Thus we have allowed Russia to advance to the walls of Herat; to tear up the clause of the treaty of 1856, which prohibited her from covering the Black Sea with her fleets; to obtain possession of Batoum, which she is now quietly fortifying in defiance of treaty; to creep down the coast of Manchuria to the borders of the Corea, and to annex the island of Saghalien. The next aggression proposed in this direction is indicated in the following paragraph, taken from the 'Times' of the 2d of September:—

"RUSSIA IN THE COREA.—German papers publish the following extract from the 'Vladivostok'—a journal published in the seaport of the same name at the extreme southern corner of the Russian Asiatic coast: 'The importance of Vladivostok as a seaport is seriously affected by the fact that it is frozen in winter. Hence the opinion has been gaining ground that either Port Lazarev, in Corea, or the island of Quelpaert (33° 11' N. lat.), or that of Tsusima (34° 40' N. lat.), should be substituted for Vladivostok. As to Port Lazarev, it is by no means certain that it is free from ice all the year round; and, what is of greater moment, it would be necessary to take possession of about the half of the Korean peninsula in order to secure undisturbed occupation of the port—a proceeding certain to provoke the enmity of Japan. The situation of Quelpaert is excellent, but unfortunately there is not a good haven in the island.

The island of Tsusima was visited about 1860 by the Russian frigate *Possadnik*, and the Russian flag was hoisted but subsequently withdrawn. It is some 600 miles distant from our own territory, and so could not well be made a basis of operations. It would seem, therefore, unavoidable to preserve Vladivostok as the base of all serious operations; but to occupy and fortify Tsusima as a marine station well armed and provisioned. It would thus help to make good some of the drawbacks of Vladivostok.' In connection with this suggestion, it may be mentioned that the island of Tsusima is Japanese territory, and could not be occupied except with the consent of the Government of Japan."

It is to be remarked that the last sentence is the comment of the German paper, and does not form part of the quotation from the 'Vladivostok.'

As it may be of interest to your readers to know the circumstances under which Tsusima was visited by the Russian frigate *Possadnik*, and the Russian flag was hoisted on that island but subsequently withdrawn, I will venture to narrate them. The incident, however, took place in 1861, and not in the previous year, as erroneously stated in the Russian paper. It was in the month of August, almost immediately after the attack which had been made upon the British Legation at Yedo by a band of Japanese assassins, that intelligence reached it of the occupation of the island of Tsusima by Russia, in violation of the treaties which guaranteed the territorial integrity of Japan.

Sir Rutherford Alcock, then British Minister in Japan, accordingly despatched me to that little-known island in H.M.S. *Ringdove*, to inquire into the truth of the

rumour ; Admiral Hope proceeding thither at the same time in his flag-ship, to render such assistance and advice as might seem necessary. The timidity of the Japanese Government at the time was so great that they declined to give us any official assistance, for fear of becoming embroiled with Russia, and I was obliged to proceed to Nagasaki for the purpose of picking up an interpreter. It is about 150 miles from that port to Tsusima ; and on the morning following our departure from Nagasaki we found ourselves in sight of the island, its twin peaks rising to a height of from 1500 to 1800 feet, heavily timbered to their summits, with here and there a clearing and a wreath of smoke, indicating the presence of a scattered population. We were approaching the island from the south-east, and were in entire ignorance of its ports or centres of habitation. We knew that it was the territory of a prince or *daimio*, and we presumed that it must have a capital, so we sent a boat on shore as we neared a fishing hamlet, to ask the way to it. In pursuance of the directions thus received, we continued steaming for a couple of hours along the south-eastern shores of the island, and were much struck by its evident fertility, its fine forests, and pretty scenery, as we opened up one wooded valley after another. Suddenly we came upon a small semicircular harbour, affording an admirable shelter for country craft, with a narrow entrance between projecting wooded bluffs. At the head of this little haven, and skirting its shore, was the town of Fatchio, a place containing possibly from 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants, and the residence of the *daimio*, whose palace, I was afterwards informed, was about two miles distant.

We did not go much beyond the mouth of the harbour, being entirely ignorant of its depth of water and the character of the anchorage ; and I immediately went on shore to open up communication with the inhabitants. This, however, did not prove a very easy matter. First, some petty officials came down and warned us off. Finding that we paid no attention to their gesticulations, and insisted on landing, they retreated a few yards as we jumped on shore, forming, with the assistance of a crowd which had now joined them, a semicircle at a distance of a few yards, without manifesting any signs of hostility, but with the apparent intention of amiably and good-naturedly barring our way, should we attempt to go into the town. Our interpreter now commenced a parley, the result of which was, that we were shown into a pretty little wooden erection like a summer-house, on the margin of the sea, at a distance of about a quarter of a mile from the town, and requested to wait there until our arrival and wishes were reported in the proper quarter. Here we were objects of interest to an admiring crowd, principally composed of small boys, for more than an hour, when a messenger returned with the information that the officials refused to receive me, and requested me to return on board the ship, and leave them in peace. This I positively declined to do. As it was now getting on towards the afternoon, I said that, so far from complying with their wishes, I intended to send for my meals and sleeping arrangements, and live in the summer-house—which at that time of year formed delightfully cool quarters—if necessary, for a week. I explained that my patience was inexhaustible, that my time was unlimited, and

that I had the less scruple in forcing myself upon their hospitality, as I should ask them for nothing, not even for protection, as I should make arrangements for a guard of blue-jackets to be permanently stationed on shore for my protection. Whereas, if the prince would accord me an interview, it would probably not last an hour, and we should relieve them of our presence the same evening. The messenger hurried off on hearing the disagreeable alternative I had proposed, and in less than an hour I saw that it had produced its effect; for a *norimon*, or native palanquin, appeared on the strand, being hurried along on the shoulders of its bearers, and containing a two-sworded official of a very different rank from the humble functionary with whom I had hitherto been in communication. He was accompanied by a man of a lower grade, and for a minute or two we vied with each other in the lowliness of our bows and the *empressement* of our salutations. Then, with many apologies and compliments, I was informed that the *daimio* was too ill to receive me; and in order to convince me that this was no sham illness contrived for the occasion, many details were entered into which were quite unnecessary, for they in no degree removed my suspicions. However, I finally consented to an interview with his first minister instead; but inasmuch as our appearance in the harbour had, according to my informant, already produced great consternation in the town, and as the peace of mind of the inhabitants would be still further disturbed by the presence of a foreigner in their streets, an event hitherto unknown, and as the building in which I was to be received lay at the other extremity of the town, I was requested to agree to the hour

for the meeting being fixed for midnight. I was perfectly well aware that this was only an excuse for preventing me from seeing the town or its inhabitants; but I was too well satisfied at having succeeded so far to raise any objection—and after a further interchange of polite ceremony, I returned to the ship, having spent nearly four hours in the summer-house.

The view in Fatchio Bay as the sun set was enchanting; the heavy vegetation coming in places to the water's edge, in others clambering over rocks that rose precipitously from the sea—the prettily situated little town nestling among its gardens along the shore, the wooded slopes cut up into cultivated valleys and rising to a peak nearly two thousand feet above the sea,—all formed a prospect that confirmed the good taste of the Russians in selecting the island for annexation.

In my interview with the official, although pressed to state the reasons of my visit, I had absolutely declined to do so to any one except the prince himself or the minister he might depute to receive me; so that doubtless the curiosity of the authorities was raised to the highest pitch, and the mysterious nature of my proceedings was calculated not a little to excite their suspicions; but this I considered a lesser evil than prematurely to reveal the object of my mission. About eleven o'clock the glimmer of Japanese lanterns at the summer-house told me that my escort had arrived to conduct me to the place of meeting, and that the natives intended to keep faith with me, in regard to which I had been in considerable doubt. I therefore put off for the shore, accompanied by the captain of the Ringdove and another boat con-

taining a guard of a dozen blue-jackets, as it was not considered wise to make a midnight promenade through an unknown town totally unattended ; moreover, I considered it advisable to invest the whole proceeding with as much importance as possible.

There were, as far as I remember, about twenty *samurai*, or retainers of the prince, with two or three *norimon*s in waiting, and they looked rather timidly and suspiciously at the blue-jackets as they jumped on shore and formed in line ; and indeed the leading official, who was the same with whom I already had an interview, informed me that their presence was quite unnecessary. But on this point I differed with him ; and refusing to ensconce myself in a *norimon*, from which I should have failed to see even the little that was visible in the dark, I started off on foot, between two files of sailors, on my novel expedition.

It is difficult to judge distance at night except by time ; but as we walked for more than half an hour, the distance traversed must have been at least two miles. More than half of this was through the straggling town, along narrow streets absolutely deserted. Every house had been closed by order, no living soul was to be seen, not even a light glimmered through the shutters. It was a brilliantly clear starlight night, so that I could see enough to observe that the place differed in no respect from an ordinary Japanese third-class town ; so we tramped silently along, the stillness only occasionally disturbed by the barking of a dog, until we emerged into what seemed a straggling suburb, when we turned suddenly into a gateway, went along a short avenue, and entered a building the external characteristics of which I have forgotten, if, indeed,

it was light enough to see them ; and so along a passage, the walls of which were formed of paper screens, to an apartment in which stood a group of two-sworded officials. One of these, who proved to be the first minister himself, now advanced to receive me. He was an agreeable, intelligent-looking man of about five-and-forty, very dignified and self-possessed in manner, and altogether a good specimen of his race. After introducing me to his colleagues, of whom there were four, if I remember rightly, forming, I imagine, a sort of privy council to the prince, I was conducted into another long narrow room, the walls of which were also of paper, and which had evidently been arranged with the idea of meeting the requirements of foreign taste. Down the centre of this room was a long low table, about two feet broad and twenty feet long, covered with red cloth, and on both sides were high benches, almost as high as the table, also covered with red cloth. The first minister invited me to sit at the head of this table, which I declined to do unless he sat by my side. This point of etiquette decided, the other functionaries, the captain and one or two officers of the Ringdove, seated themselves, and tea was brought in. In the centre of the table was the usual smoking arrangement, looking not unlike an inkstand, with a receptacle for the tobacco on one side, a fire-ball on the other, a pot to receive the ashes of the pipes in the middle, and the pipes themselves, with their diminutive bowls, lying like pins in the tray. As it only takes two whiffs to smoke a pipe, one smokes at least twenty in the course of a moderate visit. If my hosts were anxious to know the nature of my business, they manifested no impatience. We drank several small cups of tea, smoked

several pipes, and made a great many inane and complimentary remarks, before I felt that I could approach the subject at issue, which I did at last with the incidental observation that I believed we were not the first strangers who had come to Tsusima, but that they had already had a visit from the Russians. To my surprise the minister opened his eyes with well-feigned astonishment, and made the interpreter repeat the remark, as though he must have misunderstood it.

"No," he said, when it was repeated; "no Russians have ever been here."

I was fairly nonplussed.

"Will you explain to him," I said to the interpreter, "that I have had positive information that the Russians are now in Tsusima, and I have come here to see if it is true?"

"It is not true," he said; "they are not here, and have never been here."

This was the promising way in which our interview began. It lasted for more than two hours. At the expiration of that time, I had, as the result of a laborious confidence-inspiring process, into the details of which it is not necessary to enter, extracted from this same discreet and reticent functionary the fact that the Russians had been established in the island for six months; that they had built houses for themselves; that they had had a fight with the inhabitants, in the course of which one of the latter had been killed; and that the prince and all his Court were living in a chronic state of panic and despair. My informant further admitted that they had been desired by the Russians to keep their presence in the island a secret, under penalty of the gravest conse-

quences; and that the reason he had denied that they were here was from the dread of punishment. Nothing could exceed the delight and gratitude manifested by all present at the prospect of being relieved of the presence of these unwelcome visitors; but they were still too timid to compromise themselves by giving us a guide to lead us to where they were. All they would say was, that if we went round to the other side of the island we should find a large harbour, and if we looked for them there we should find them. At that time this island had not been surveyed, and so our expedition partook largely of the character of one of exploration. The dawn was almost breaking when our nocturnal interview came to an end; but the streets were still silent, and the houses still hermetically sealed, as we passed between them once more on our way back to the ship.

Steaming out of Fatchio harbour, we coasted round the southern end of the island and along its western shore. As we did so, the highlands of the Corea were distinctly visible, and one could not but be struck with the commanding position which this island occupies strategically, situated as it is in the centre of the straits which separate the Corea from Japan, and which afford access into the Yellow Sea. We had coasted along half the length of the island, which is about sixty miles long, when we observed a large opening, as though it were divided in the middle by straits, and into this we steamed. To our amazement we found ourselves in a perfect labyrinth of lanes of water. In every direction, to the right and left and in front of us, there spread an intricate network of deep narrow channels, divided by rocky promontories clothed with

heavy timber. Large forest-trees sprang from the water's edge, twining their huge roots among the rocks, and drooping their foliage into the water. It was so deep even close to the shore that it was difficult to find anchorage; and our excitement was so great, in our desire to explore this strange and unknown water retreat, that we were off in boats before the anchor was down. We found as we paddled along these singular channels that we were in a harbour in which whole fleets might be concealed from observation—hidden away, so to speak, among the trees. Here and there the inlets expanded, so as to form capacious harbours, again narrowing, often to a breadth of scarce a hundred yards. There was no sign of human habitation anywhere; the only evidence of man were two Buddhist or Sintoo shrines, perched upon pinnacles of rock under the shade of huge wide-spreading trees, and approached by rock-cut steps. For hours we pulled about in this magnificent haven, never tired of wondering at its capacity, its safety from storms, its freedom from dangers to navigation, the extraordinary beauty of the scenery by which it was surrounded, the richness of the vegetation, and the absolute calm and stillness which seemed to brood over the whole landscape.

But all this time we saw nothing of the Russians. We passed from one deep creek into another, over the glassy surface of the water, only to exchange their unbroken solitudes, and to find some new and unexpected channel winding off in some fresh direction. At last, in one of these, our attention was suddenly attracted by some tapering spars that seemed to shoot out of the branches of a tree; and rounding a corner, we came upon the Russian frigate, moored liter-

ally, stem and stern, to the branches of a pair of forest giants, and with a plank-way to the shore.

If we were startled to come upon her thus unexpectedly, our surprise can have been nothing to that of those on board at seeing an English man-of-war's boat pull into the sort of pirate's cove in which they had stowed themselves away. Indeed, the Russian captain afterwards told me that he had been so long in solitude that he could scarcely believe his eyes when we burst thus suddenly upon them, like visitors from some other world. However, he was too much of a gentleman to betray anything but pleasure and apparent gratification at receiving me, when I stepped upon his deck and introduced myself. He at once invited me most hospitably to his cabin; and while he entertained me with refreshments, we spent a few minutes in some very amusing diplomatic fencing. He was here, he said, for hydrographical purposes, and had made a survey of the island, in obedience to instructions. Looking out of the cabin window, from which was visible a frame-house with a barn-yard, in which was a cow and some poultry, I asked him if he combined agriculture with hydrography, as the one pursuit implied a more protracted visit to the island than the other. He admitted that he had been here for more than six months; that his survey was finished, but that he had received instructions to remain till further orders; and that, to pass away the time, and make himself comfortable, he was doing a little farming. I then went on shore to see his establishment. He had got a hospital for the sick, from which a Russian flag was flying, a dairy and poultry-yard, a Russian steam-bath, and a little cottage, in which to vary his residence from ship-

board. There was a vegetable garden, and all the signs of a very comfortable little naval settlement, at least so far as it was possible for the crew of one frigate to make one. I gently hinted at the existence of treaties and so forth; but he said that he was a sailor, and not a diplomatist, and knew nothing about them. All he knew were his orders. He denied that he had had any dispute of importance with the natives, with whom, he declared, he was on very good terms—though, as their nearest village was at some distance, he saw very little of them.

The captain of the *Possadnik* turned out such a charming companion, and seemed so delighted to have his monotony varied even by an inquisitive *diplomat*, that I was quite sorry when the lateness of the hour warned me that I must return to my own ship, in which, as I explained to him, I should be absent for a day, so that it would be useless for him to attempt to return my visit at once, which, however, I promised to repeat. That night we steamed out to the offing, where the admiral was cruising in his flag-ship, and the next morning I went on board and reported my discovery. Soon after the admiral transferred himself to the *Ringdove*, and we steamed back to *Tsushima* harbour, finally bringing her to Russian Cove, as we had named the *Possadnik's* settlement.

The Russian captain now came and called and dined with us, and we discussed the situation in the most amicable manner; the result at which we arrived being, that the admiral should himself go to *Olga Bay* on the coast of *Manchuria*, at which port the Russian admiral then was, and present the diplomatic view of the situation to that functionary, obtaining from him

the necessary orders for the evacuation of the island by the *Possadnik* and her crew. The captain of that ship assured the admiral that he would receive these orders with delight, as he was heartily sick of his exile.

Meantime our surveying parties had not been idle. It was found that the harbour or sound in which we were nearly divided the island into two; a narrow strip of land, not half a mile wide, alone connecting the northern with the southern half, each section being about thirty miles long and from fifteen to twenty broad. I had no means of ascertaining the amount of the population; but as the island is very fertile, and is well peopled in parts, it probably contains over a hundred thousand inhabitants. From the wooded heights of *Tsushima Sound* the *Corea* is very plainly visible, and, in those days, the inhabitants of *Tsushima* maintained more intercourse with that country than did any other part of Japan. The climate in summer was perfect, and even in winter it is extremely mild.

Here, as the Russian paper observes, there is no fear of frost closing the harbour, which would form one of the finest naval stations in the world; while the agricultural and other resources of the island itself would make it a most valuable acquisition to any Power which might be lucky enough to obtain possession of it. Fortunately the Japanese are fully alive to its importance; and under existing treaties it could only be obtained possession of by an act of war, as the Japanese Government would certainly refuse to part with it for any pecuniary consideration, and the Powers which have treaties with Japan are pledged to ensure its integrity as against each other. From the

cool way in which the Russian paper mentions the possible annexation of the island, no objections on this score seem to have occurred to it. "It would seem, therefore," it says, "unavoidable to preserve Vladivostock as the base of all serious operations; but to occupy and fortify Tsusima as a marine station well armed and provisioned." By being thoroughly forewarned of this intention, the Powers interested may possibly make it "avoidable"; and it would certainly be a gross breach of faith on their part towards Japan to allow the harbour to be occupied by force. The extreme importance of it to Russia as a winter naval station is indicated by the remarks of the Russian paper; while there is no Power more interested than England in preventing Russia from having a port in the Eastern seas open in winter. Our undefended colonies, our enormous commercial interests, would render resistance to such an act a necessary measure of self-preservation in the case of any European Power; but it is doubly so with Russia, of whose aggressive tendencies, unhindered by scruple of any sort, we have recently had such ample testimony. Every nation is entitled to consider an aggressive act of another nation, even though it is not immediately directed against its own territory, a *casus belli*. Thus, if the Russians chose to declare war against England for occupying Port Hamilton, we should have no cause to complain. It is a strategic measure which will undoubtedly strengthen

our position against her in time of war; and she is entitled to regard it as of hostile intent even in time of peace. It is simply a question as to whether it is worth her while to go to war about it—and she decides that it is not. But the danger to England of Tsusima in Russian hands is far greater than the danger to Russia of Port Hamilton in English hands; and it may be more economical for England to make the occupation of Tsusima by Russia a *casus belli* now, than to wait till she has turned it into an impregnable naval station, in which immense fleets could lie in safety, and from which her cruisers could issue at all seasons of the year to prey upon our commerce and bombard our colonies. That the annexation of this island is as much part of the programme of her Government as the annexations of Khiva and Merv have formerly been, there is not the smallest doubt. Their first attempt to effect a quiet and unobtrusive occupation was, fortunately, frustrated in the manner above described. Admiral Hope at once steamed off to Olga Bay, and the result of his communication with the Russian admiral was an order for the immediate evacuation of Tsusima by the Possadnik.

I have thought that this slight narrative of the circumstances under which, in the words of the 'Vladivostok,' "the Russian flag was hoisted but subsequently withdrawn" from the island of Tsusima, might be a hint not thrown away in view of future contingencies.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

MERLIN AND KENTIGERN.

A LEGEND OF TWEEDDALE.

THIS ballad is founded on a passage in Fordun's 'Scotichronicon' (iii. 31), in which Kentigern, or St Mungo, the patron saint of Glasgow, is brought into communication with Merlin, the well-known Welsh enchanter of the medieval romances. Of course no man accepts Fordun as a voucher for any historical fact; but there is evidence enough, independent of Fordun, to prove that St Kentigern and Merlin were contemporaries, both being representative characters of a great religious movement in the sixth century—the one representing the advancing cause of Christianity in the Celtic or Cymro-Celtic kingdom of Strathclyde, the other the waning cause of Druidism. The battle of Arderydd, A.D. 573, fought between the Christianised King Rhydderch Hael and the heathen monarch Gwenddoleu, divided the Britons of the west, in point of religion, into two unequal halves, of which the lesser was destined speedily to be absorbed into the larger. Of this threatened absorption, Merlin, the Court bard of Gwenddoleu, in the popular tradition appears as the rueful prophet; there is no hope for him or his sun-worship any more, and he must mope about the hills of the south Highlands, then the central part of the kingdom of Strathclyde, till he dies. This is the historical kernel of the miraculous legends which afterwards grew up on both sides of the struggle round the person of their prominent representatives—legends amply sufficient to prove the social importance of the personages concerned, however transparently fictitious, and often ludicrously childish in their details. Discount the silly miracles so bountifully showered on the saint, and the tricks of devilry so lavishly attributed to the Court minstrel of the heathen king, and you have the lasting truth of popular poetical tradition, which Aristotle pronounced to be more philosophical than history. The handling which Roger Bacon, and Doctor Faust, and other such victims of popular prejudice received in the middle ages, may teach us that we are only performing an act of historical justice when we represent Merlin, the Welsh enchanter, in a much more noble light than that in which he appears in the medieval romances, in the pages of the monkish chronicles, or even in the classical portraiture of Lord Tennyson. The facts alluded to in the verses, so far as Kentigern is concerned, will be found in the late Bishop Forbes's 'Kalendar of Scottish Saints' (Edinburgh, 1872); in Skene's 'Celtic Scotland,' ii. 179; and in 'The Legends of St Kentigern, his Friends and Disciples,' by the late Professor Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1872); and in regard to Merlin, in 'Stephen's Literature of the Cymri' (London, 1876); in the 'Morte Arthur'; in Professor Veitch's interesting and instructive volume on 'The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border' (Glasgow, 1878); and in the recent work of Mr Beveridge on 'Culross and Tulliallan' (Edinburgh, Blackwood, 1885).

COME with me fair maiden, Liliās,
Come and sit a space with me,
Where the Powsail purls and prattles
Gently by this old thorn tree.¹

Come, and stir good thoughts within me,
With bright looks of kindly cheer;
Sweetly flows an old man's story
Where the young are fond to hear.

¹ The thorn-tree stands on the burn, about fifteen yards above its junction with the Tweed, below the church of Drummelzier. Here the local tradition has it that the Enchanter was buried.

Yesterday, when I was wandering
O'er the Broad Law's treeless back,
Came a mist, a white mist floating
Slowly o'er the moory track.

And ever as it travelled lightly
Where the fitful breeze might be,
It took new shapes of strangest seeming
That looked weirdly upon me :

Now a whale, and now an ostrich,
With a neck of longest span ;
Now a camel, now a white bear,
Now a snowy-locked old man.

And I thought on old man Merlin—
Merlin, wizard of the Tweed,—
Moaning o'er the tway-cleft kingdom,
Wailing o'er his waning creed.

For he was a heathen, Lilius,
Mighty man of place and pride,
Counsellor and bard and prophet
In the kingdom of Strathclyde.

And when Roderick, to the false gods
False, and faithful to the true,
In the battle of Arderydd¹
Slew the mighty Gwenddoleu ;

Merlin old, his bard and prophet,
Cleaving to the Cymric creed,
Moaning o'er the lost Sun-worship,
Wandered lonely by the Tweed :

Seeking death, but might not find it ;
For he deemed it sin to die
With a self-implanted dagger
In the bright Sun's beaming eye.

And he came to where Drummelzier's
Kirk looks o'er the Powsail brook ;
And sadly here, with thoughtful brooding,
On a stone his seat he took.

Here he sate, with none to friend him
In his sorrow and his dool,
But his little dog, a black one,
And a young pig white as wool.²

¹ Mr Skene, in an interesting paper in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians*, February 1865, fixes the site of this battle with great probability not far from Longtown, on the great road between that town and Langholm, near the junction of the Liddell and the Esk.

² The black dog is a familiar appendage of necromancy and wizardry ; but the

Sate and looked, when lo! a figure
Cloaked and cowed, with solemn gait
Through the shower and through the sun-glint
Came where wizard Merlin sate:

Came as one that hath a message
Where delay might father loss,
On his breast a death's-head brodered,
In his skinny hand a cross.

"Who art thou," cried Merlin, "coming
From the East where dwell my foes?
I have here enough of sorrows,
Let me feed upon my woes!

"Cause have I to hate the traitor
Who hath laid my monarch low;
Spare to triumph rudely o'er me,
Prostrate in my utter woe!

"Cause have I to hate the Christian;
Hence, and give mine eyes release
From thy death's-heads and thy crosses!
Let old Merlin die in peace."

"Fond old man, I may not leave thee;
I am here by God's command,
With dear balm of benediction
Near thy bed in death to stand.

"I am Kentigern: my mother,
Not far from the Isle of May,
Daughter of the king of Lothian,
Bore me in a wondrous way.

"Saint Theneu, my blissful mother,
Whom the spiteful waves did toss
Rudely, in a fragile shallop
Prisoned, bore me at Culross.

"And St Serf, from where Loch Leven
Laves the roots of Lomond Ben,
Washed me thoroughly in the water
Of regeneration then.

little pig is peculiarly Welsh, and holds a prominent place in the oldest Cymric poetry. There is a whole class of poems attributed to Merlin, beginning with "Listen, O little pig! O happy little pig!" which Stephen, in his literature of the Cymri, considers to be symbolical of the Welsh people. How the little snouted creature came to attain this dignity he does not explain; but it is no doubt a relic of the rural economy of the oldest times, when the *θεῖος ἰσοπλάς*, the "divine swineherd," was deemed worthy of occupying a prominent position among the retainers of a Greek kingship.

"And my mother there devoted
Me to God, the One, the True,
To the savage West to wander,
And convert the heathen crew.

"Bless the Lord this day, old Merlin:
In the dear name of Theneu,
I am come with God's salvation,
On the tree who died for you."

"Mock me not, thou sallow shaveling!
By yon God that rides on high,
In the pure old Druid worship
I have lived and I will die.

"Gods in guise of man we know not,
Scourged and pierced and crucified;
God we own above all human,
Baal careering in his pride:

"Baal, whence flows Fire's holy fountain,
Pulsing with a pulse of might;
Baal, that o'er yon green Trahenna,¹
Streams with floods of holy light;

"Baal, whose voice is in the thunder,
Rolling far from glen to glen;
Baal, whose glance is lightning darted
From the blue crest of the Ben;

"Baal, whose fiery virtue melteth
Crusted ice and stony hail
Into rills that leap redundant,
Spreading sweetness through the vale;—

"Him I own within, without me,
In the great and in the small—
In the near and in the far off,
In the each and in the all.

"Tempt me not with human Saviours,
Gods to handle and to feel!
To the bright broad eye of Heaven,
Life-dispensing Baal, I kneel. .

¹ One of those green softly aloping mountains which are the glory of Peebles shire. It rises right opposite Drummelzier on the north bank of the Tweed, right above the mouth of the Biggar water. The name, like not a few others in the district, is manifestly Welsh or Cornish, not Gaelic.

"Preach the cross to savage Saxons ;
Crosses come when they are nigh :
As old Druid wisdom taught me,
I have lived and I will die !"

Then with holy hand uplifted
Spake the saintly Kentigern,
And with swelling eye of pity,
"Old man, thou hast much to learn.

"But the gnarled oak can no man
Bend like rush or osier wand ;
Take my love, and take my blessing,
With thee to the Spirit-land.

"Allwhere lives a thoughtful Reason,¹
In the sky and in the sod ;
Mind, and Thought, and shaping Reason,
This we worship, one true God.

"Sun and moon, and forky levin,
Floods by sea, and storms by land,
Are but ministers and servants,
Tools in the Great Master's hand.

"Take my prayer, and take my blessing ;
Though I may not move thy will,
Whom I serve hath gracious magic
To bring good from harshest ill.

"In His house are many mansions ;
If thy heart is pure and true,
He can save with stretch of mercy,
Merlin old and Gwenddoleu."

Spake : and with his cloak wrapt round him,
Eastward o'er the moor he strode,
Leaving wise old Merlin brooding
Strangely o'er the Christian's God.

But his brooding must be barren :
Who can change an old man's creed ?
Romish gods might not be devils,
But Baal was God for Merlin's need.

With an eye of moody-wandering
Gaze, he followed Kentigern,
Where he brushed the purple heather,
Where he swept the plummy fern.

¹ The λόγος of John i. 1.

And he wandered o'er the moorland,
Wrapt in sorrow and in dool,
With his small black dog behind him,
And his young pig white as wool;

Wandered till he found a hollow
Cavern by the river's brim,
Where a witch, a wily lady,
With a strong spell prisoned him.¹

And she kept him there, the fell one,
Till his eyes with age grew dim;
Then the wily fair, the false one,
Mixed the cup of death for him.

And wayfaring people found him
Stretched beside the river's brim;
And beneath this ragged thorn-tree,
Here they dug a grave for him.

And his small black dog they buried,
And his little pig with him;
And they wailed before the Sun-god
Sadly by the river's brim.

Weep for him, and kiss me, Lillas,
Kindly kisses help our need,
When a tearful story moves us
On the flowery banks of Tweed!

¹ 'Morte Arthur,' vol. i. ch. 60, Wright's edition.

THE SCOTS AND ENGLISH BOWMEN.

WITH the entire ascendancy of firearms in warfare has perished one of the most picturesque features of ancient military display. The dropping fire of skirmishing riflemen from coigns of vantage—on hillside, among rocks or woodland—may have something for eye and ear which was lacking in the silent duel of individual archers, as they crept from tree-trunk to tree-trunk, or winged the feathered messenger of death from behind the shelter of a huge shield or pavise; but certainly the wreathed volumes of smoke which obscure the battle-fields of the present day are much less imposing than the hundreds of shafts launched simultaneously into the air by as many brawny and skilful arms, in such close proximity, and with such force and certainty, as to resemble a cloud of feathered creatures swooping upon their prey. It was in this art of volley-firing that the English archers excelled; and through their proficiency in it, it came to pass that they so often triumphed in encounters on Scottish soil over the brave phalanx of Northern pikemen, and in their turn baffled invasion in many a field—from the fight of the Standard at Northallerton down to the dark carnage of Flodden.

It is almost impossible to obtain a real picture of such a scene. Only in the remotest countries of the world could anything resembling it be found at the present day. The deserts whence Alaric and Tamerlane drew their dusky swarms of archers—the hordes who followed the great king to fight, and obscured the light of the sun with their arrows—have all at last come under the influence of

the death-dealing powder with which tradition associates the name of Roger Bacon, even though it may be rudely manufactured, and discharged through the old-fashioned machinery of flint and steel, instead of the simple certainty of fulminate. Muskets for the interior of Africa are still made in Birmingham, with the flint-lock and priming-pan of a century ago,—and for this reason, that while powder can be made and flints collected in the very midst of the desert sands of the Soudan or the Sahara, it would be a work of risk or of impossibility to import percussion-caps, or cartridges adapted to central-fire or hammerless guns; and, on similar grounds, the long barrel retains its supremacy as a weapon of offence in those regions to the present day. When the trader from Tripoli visits Valetta, he may be seen carefully measuring the lengthy tubes which are exhibited in the gunsmith's show-cases, in order that he may find a weapon of sufficient calibre for the coarse and slack-shooting powder he is compelled to use. It was this inadequacy on the part of the musket which kept archery so long in partial use before the fiat of total exclusion from the battle-field was passed. Sir James Turner, James II.'s truculent Scottish general, in his '*Pallas Armata*,' written in 1683, argued in favour of bringing back the use of the bow, for "three positive reasons," which he enumerates in this wise: first, that arrows are very galling to horses, and therefore would be more calculated to throw cavalry into disorder than bullets; secondly, that greater rapidity in firing was attainable with the bow than with the musket of

that day;¹ and thirdly, that a deeper formation was permissible for archers than for musketeers—the bowmen shooting with ease over the heads of the leading files. Indeed, until the invention of the rocket, the parabola described by a far-shot arrow gave it a decided advantage in that regard, as it enabled a commander to advance troops under cover of a fire from archers in the rear. The weight of the firearm then carried—of the musket-rest which it was necessary to use, and of the Swedish feather, or pointed stake with which the foot-soldier protected himself against the danger of being ridden down by cavalry—furnished additional points in favour of the bow, and helped to keep it in use, until the improvement in the firelock and the adoption of the bayonet gave the preponderance in lightness and efficiency as a weapon to the immortal “Brown Bess.” Thus at last the

“Iron sleet of arrowy shower,”

which Robert Lambe, the martial vicar of Norham, has so quaintly described in his ballad chronicle of Flodden field, became a thing forgotten, of which but the faintest image can be conjured up by those who have watched the single arrows soaring and falling by the mark on any of the very few shooting-grounds in Great Britain where the old military archery is still imitated.

For while the march of invention was putting an end to archery as a part of military tactics, it was establishing itself as a wholesome exercise and interesting sport. In

order to secure efficiency in war, the practice of archery was not only encouraged but enjoined by the Legislature, and regular places for pursuing it were established throughout the country. Hence, as in the present day the traveller through Flanders may see outside every town from Lille to Bruges the tall mast which sustains on *fete* days the popinjay—aim for the crossbowmen and archers—so beneath the walls of almost every place of note, and near village-greens or the outskirts of forests, to this moment the name of Butts records the practising-ground where the youth were trained in the use of the national weapon, where the man of mature years kept himself in preparation for the possible emergencies of invasion or civil disturbance, and where even grave elders did not disdain to encourage the manly sport, and obtain for themselves the “health unbought” which regular exercise such as bowmanry affords will often ensure to the close of a long life. A Coventry antiquarian not many years ago happened to observe a number of remarkable little hollows in the old stones of the city walls, where it nearly adjoined a district known as the Butts, and by careful examination and comparison discovered that these peculiar marks were made by the archers who came outside the town to practise, and when their arrows became blunted by the targets, or more probably by striking the ground—for the turf, we read, was wont to be “eaten bare” by the arrows—were accustomed to sharpen them

¹ The Crown Prince Rudolph, in his recent journal of a tour in the East, speaks of the Bedouins at the springs of Moses carrying primitive guns, “with long cords twisted round them, which had to be lighted and let burn until they came in contact with the powder in the pan. The poor sportsman must therefore wait for several minutes in expectation of the joyous event.” This is an exact description of the matchlock carried by the English soldier in 1677.

by rubbing the steel points against the walls. That students and professional men, and even those excepted by the statute of Henry VIII., by which every man under sixty, except spiritual persons, justices, &c., was commanded to use shooting with the long bow, occasionally took part in the practice, is evident from the plan and dialogue of the 'Toxophilus,' that first and most famous treatise upon shooting, written by Queen Elizabeth's tutor, Roger Ascham; while the universality of archery is implied in the injunction of the statute quoted above, that every man should provide bows for his servants and children. It was thus that archery interpenetrated itself into the national life, and became a passion with the votary of wholesome recreation, as well as with the soldier and the sportsman.

One of the earliest sovereigns to recognise the necessity of a general acquaintance with the art of handling the bow was the ill-fated James I. of Scotland, who is said himself to have acquired a love for the weapon during his captivity at Windsor. It is in all probability to the reign of this monarch that a popular anecdote is to be attributed relating to the burghers of the little town of North Berwick, who appear to have been so much addicted to the pursuit of the game of golf, that they neglected their archery. Consequently the parish bell was ordered to be rung every Sunday morning at eight to call them to the practice at the butts, and at ten the bell began ringing again as a signal that they were to stop and repair to church to hear Mass. If they had practised shooting and had been to church, they were permitted to play golf in the afternoon. James tried the power of ridicule, as well as authority, to promote the

practice of archery among his subjects: but in vain, apparently, for the predominance still remained with England for some centuries; and it is far from impossible that one cause at least of this was the superiority of the English bows, which were often imported from Spain and Flanders—while the main Continental commerce of Scotland was with France, where archery was at so low an ebb that they had to depend upon the assistance of hired Genoese cross-bowmen in their wars with other nations. Most probably many of the English bowmen, as well as the Scottish, were armed with home-made weapons; but the great barons and the kings themselves, from a very early period of English history, took pains to provide their vassals and retainers with bows of the costliest quality—so that as fine wood, well cared for, is practically indestructible, a large number of picked men were invariably to be found equipped in the very highest style of efficiency. More than once we find that the Spaniards placed an embargo upon the exportation of yew for bowstaves in England, with a view, no doubt, of putting her at a disadvantage; nay, at the period of the Black Prince's invasion, they are stated to have cut down the yew-trees in some provinces to diminish the supply, which they feared might fall into English hands. It was this fear of scarcity which caused the prohibition of the use of yew bows by youths under seventeen, who had to content themselves with "wich-hazel."

The restrictive policy on the part of Spain ultimately led in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the invention, or rather the introduction from the Low Countries, of pieced or backed bows, in which the requisite combination

of strength and elasticity was obtained by joining together with glue strips of yew, ash, walnut, elm, hickory, or other foreign woods, thus producing excellent implements for practice or gentle usage, though less adapted for rough work and exposure to weather than the staves of one wood only, of which "self" bows are made. It is worth noting that this kind of bow is stated to have first come into vogue in Lancashire, where the yew-tree never grew plentifully; while the distance of that palatinate from the principal seaports—Liverpool being then but a mere fishing village—must have rendered a foreign supply uncertain and difficult. Turkish and oriental bows, although very long distances have been covered by their shots, never obtained any favour in this country, being made of horn or sinew, easily affected by damp or frost, shorter than our bows, and used with arrows of enormous length awkwardly drawn right across the body. The legendary cloth-yard arrow was a maximum length for the shaft according to the English way of shooting. Sir Samuel Meyrick gives a very fair explanation of the cases in which it would be used. It is considered, he says, that in a justly proportioned man, from the tip of the middle finger of one hand to that of the other when the arms are stretched out, the reach equals the height from the sole of the foot to the top of the head. Now the string of the bow should be the height of the archer, and his arrow half the length of his string. If he, then, be six feet high, he would use a cloth-yard arrow. This proportion, perhaps, seldom holds good in nature; but a shorter man might, by bringing his right ear over the centre of his body, and drawing the string to it,

leave no more of the arrow beyond the bow than what would equal the length of his middle finger if not bent round the gripe. Here, however, the veteran authority on armour falls into the popular mistake of talking of drawing the arrow to the ear, which would not admit of an accurate aim. Those who wish to see the exact point to which a skilful archer drew, should examine the portrait of Dr Spens, by Raeburn, at the Edinburgh Archers' Hall—a portrait surpassing in dignity of position and spirited drawing the finest full-lengths of Vandyck. King Henry I., whose arm was traditionally said to be the standard of the English ell-wand, would, on this hypothesis, have used arrows an ell in length; and the Cornish archers, who in 1496 shot arrows in length a full yard, must have drawn them as the Turks did, and have sacrificed to some extent accuracy of aim for the sake of strength of shooting. Some of those prodigious shafts (3 feet 2 inches in length) were preserved at the ancient mansion of Oothele, upon the Cornish side of the Tamar, as late as the year 1825; and an original arrow, the nock of which was without horn, and swelled out like that of an Asiatic make, found in the moat of Clifford's Tower at York, was in the armoury at Goodrich Court about the same time. Sir S. Meyrick considered it to be of the reign of King Henry VI., because in Leeland's days the fortress was in ruins, and in the time of Charles I., when it was again put in a state of defence, arrows were no longer used as warlike missiles. With all deference to so great an authority, it must, however, fairly be stated that, during the great Rebellion, bows and arrows are known to have been used in skir-

mishes in the remoter parts of England, especially in that third army of peasants who were equally opposed to King and Parliament, bearing as their motto,—

"If you offer to plunder or take our
cattle,
Be assured we will give you battle;"

and that the arrow in question might only have been a couple of centuries old. A few oriental arrows, and some of the usual English type and of great antiquity, are to be seen in the Arsenal at Venice; and there are some bundles of shafts, rescued from the wreck of the *Mary Rose*—a vessel sunk in Portsmouth harbour when about to sail with munitions of war to Henry VIII.'s army before Boulogne—in the Tower of London. But ancient arrows are even more scarce than ancient bows.

The Restoration gave a considerable impetus to archery as a pastime. Charles II., always a gamester in the sense of being fond of passing his time in mere diversion, was notoriously partial to bowls and mall, but had also become addicted to archery—then, as now, a popular sport in the Flemish towns where so much of his exile had been spent. There is a well-executed bust of him still to be seen in the museum of Bruges, with an inscription stating that it was given by Charles, King of Great Britain, to his brethren the archers of Bruges; and in the same town, in the hall of the Archers' Guild, there is a portrait of his youngest brother, Henry Duke of Gloucester, as one of the members of the confraternity. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the Court of the Restoration patronised the sport of archery; and it was in this reign that the Finsbury archers established in Bunhill Fields the marks still traceable in

certain names of streets, &c., at which prizes were shot for—a proceeding which about a century later led to the establishment of the oldest and most important society now existing in South Britain, the Royal Toxophilites, who still preserve with pride among their regalia the silver shield or badge, of admirable design and workmanship, presented in 1676 by Sir Edward Hungerford and General Ashfield, and won by Sir William Wood, whose monument in St James's Church, Clerkenwell, is yet to be seen with its quaint inscription beginning—

"Sir William Wood lies very near this
stone,
In's time in archery excelled by none."

Mr Philip Constable, one of the later Finsbury archers, survived to hand over to the Royal Toxophilite Society, upon its formation in 1781, several of the most interesting relics and traditions of the older body.

But in the year already mentioned, 1676, there commences the roll of a still existing and highly vigorous society in the North, the Royal Company of Scottish Archers. Every one knows that the members of this distinguished corps fulfil the duties of the Queen's Body-Guard on all occasions of State in Scotland; and we know also, that (in spite of the cavils of various English journals) this high privilege is one of their most ancient distinctions. Mr Paul's history of the Archers has completely set all such questions at rest. But of course, among the large array of distinguished names which figure on their roll, comparatively few ever think of taking bow in hand, and still fewer join in the practice matches and contests for prizes which take place so often in the Meadows and in the covered

gallery at Archers' Hall. At the same time, as recent events have proved, there are a sufficient number of skilled archers who are members of the Royal Guard, to ensure success not only on their own ground but in foreign competition. The Scottish archers of the present day can thus claim an unbroken succession from men who bore bows and aimed shafts in actual warfare. Some of the earlier members were no doubt acquainted with that venerable cleric who is mentioned in Home's 'History of the Rebellion' as having performed divine service during the civil wars with a long bow in his hand and a sheaf of arrows tucked into a silken sash fastened round his waist! Every Sabbath did he march to the church carrying the good weapon himself, while his servant came after with his case of arrows, and a claymore in a black silk belt!

While the English societies of the present day have no such uninterrupted succession, they have on their side many links with the bowmen of antiquity. In the case of the Toxophilite Society, in addition to veteran members of the Finsbury Archers already mentioned, there survived to see their institution the centenarian General Oglethorpe, who had served on the staff of Prince Eugene, and afterwards founded the colony of Georgia—who was fond of recounting how he, with the Duke of Rutland and other men of rank, in the reign of Queen Anne, used to practise shooting in the fields near London. The veteran, who survived until 1785, might also have heard of another still existing society of archers, the Woodmen of Arden, founded (or as its records say, revived) in that year, by Heneage Finch, fourth Earl of Aylesford, and captain of the

yeomen of the guard. In honour of this latter society a Warwickshire barrister, named Morfitt, composed a Latin poem which appeared in 1788, with two English translations, one in rhyme, the other in blank verse, by a Mr Joseph Weston, who also contributed a preface in which Dryden was eulogised at the expense of Pope—a piece of criticism which led to some animated controversy with Miss Seward in the literary periodicals of the day. Perhaps this attempt of Mr Morfitt's was inspired by a desire of rivalling the Jacobite Latinist, Dr Archibald Pitcairn, who had produced a volume of poems on the Royal Company about half a century before; but the English poem, though creditable, is far inferior in Attic salt to the classic North Briton.

Archery at this time became quite fashionable. A poem printed at Manchester in 1790 mentions at least twenty societies, many of which were numerously supported, and numbered members of high social standing. One of them, the Royal Kentish Bowmen, had the Prince of Wales (George IV.) as its patron; and he attended some of the meetings. Several of these societies mutually exchanged freedom, and a number of their members combined and held representative meetings on Blackheath or Cannock Chase; but the outbreak of the great French war reduced the number of their supporters. Many of them languished or became extinct, and archery in England relapsed into a moribund condition, from which it did not emerge until the commencement of the present reign, soon after which date the National Archery meeting was established, with the result of a rapid and steady improvement in the science of archery,

as well as in the number of societies and the lists of competitors. It was during the first decade of these annual contests that Mr Horace Ford, the founder of the present school of target-shooting, became the champion of England, and for several years maintained that position with scores far in excess of the highest known achievements of the past. His little handbook of Archery is the standard work upon the subject, and deserves the high estimation in which it is held, by the accurate and intelligent way in which the subject is handled. At the same time, it must needs be said that it restricts the practice of archery somewhat too rigidly to the bounds of the "York round,"—a specified number of arrows discharged at a target of regulation size and colour, at 100, 80, and 60 yards; and makes no allowance for the other varieties of distance, target, or position which help to make up the complement of the capabilities of the bow and arrow.

Two societies only at the present day are in the habit of practising at distances exceeding 100 yards: the Royal Scottish Archers shoot at 180 and 200 yards; the Woodmen of Arden at nine score yards, and more rarely at other distances up to twelve score. Ford's handbook, and the archers who follow it implicitly, denounce this shooting as no archery—mere chance-work—a way of enabling inferior performers to disguise their incompetency by attempting the impossible. It is a mode of competition in some respects essentially differing from the style of shooting which is most effective at short ranges; but the man who can hit the ace of clubs twenty times at twelve paces with a duelling pistol, need not sneer at the ordinary rifle marksman because he does not

make a bull's-eye quite as often. As a matter of experience, the best shots at long lengths are nearly always the men who are also successful at short ranges. The covered butts at Archers' Hall are as great a factor in the training of an Edinburgh Queen's Prizeman as the outdoor parties at long range in the Meadows; and during the last match between the Woodmen of Arden and the Scottish Archers, a target of proportionate diameter to the four-foot target used for the 100 yards shooting, would have been hit quite as often as in the ordinary competitions at the shorter distance. The great drawback to the practice of long-distance shooting is, that few societies in the present day possess grounds of sufficient extent for the pursuit of a sport which requires an unbroken range of at least 300 yards, and the presence of a marker to make the archer aware of the merit or defect of his last arrow. Still there is plenty of level ground in park or holm in the midland and southern counties of England, quite accessible to populous neighbourhoods, where little clubs could be formed and markers retained for the purpose of practising this form of the sport, which, when once thoroughly mastered, is far more attractive than any other kind of competition. It is unfortunate that the only English society which retains it in its programme is one which has chiefly the character of a county club, and subordinates scientific bowmanry to antique traditions and social amenities; while its remoteness from railways, and the distance at which most of its members reside, make regular attendance for practice a matter of much difficulty. But the improvement in the shooting of the Woodmen of Arden since their first

encounter with the Royal Company in 1878 is so remarkable as to show that in this kind of contest, as in all other exercises of skill and strength, "practice makes perfect." The Scottish Body-Guard themselves must have much improved since Mr Ford saw them shoot in 1846—although his prejudice against their way of shooting may have led him into a stronger expression of opinion than the facts would justify.

While insisting upon this view of archery as an exercise, it must not be supposed that we are blind to the utility of practice at shorter distances. Those writers are perfectly correct who dwell upon the importance of practice at sixty yards as the only sure way of obtaining steadiness in shooting. The old English archer not only *roved* with his bow and arrows, judging distance, shooting in the air, or trying like old Double (whom Shallow lamented so forcibly), to clap in a shaft at fourteen score and a half; but he also steadily worked for a certain space of time at the "roods," thirty, sixty, and ninety yards, at a paper six inches in diameter pinned against a butt, a bank, or an ancient tree. Many an interesting match is still shot on the thirty-yard covered range at the Edinburgh Archers' Hall; and it has this great advantage, that, well lighted and sheltered, it gives the hard-worked professional man, advocate, accountant, or Writer to the Signet, the opportunity of relaxation and exercise at the hour and time of year when he requires them most. In these days of glass houses and winter gardens standing by the acre in and about London, and for the most part languishing into bankruptcy, if some leading society like the

Royal Toxophilites would take up this clue and organise regular winter practice, archery might compete, as it ought to do, with the billiard-table as a recreation for a dark afternoon among Londoners of all ages and avocations. Numerous as are the rifle corps, the gymnasts, and the racket-players of the metropolis, there must be a certain proportion of the denizens of modern Babylon to whom such an arrangement would be welcome.

It is not given to every man to be a prize-winner at a national meeting. There is an archer's ideal—an ideal expressed by the Mercutio-like Welshman whose rhapsody ran thus: "Oh that I were in yonder sloping wood, and in my hand a bow of red yew ready bent, with a tough tight string, and a straight round shaft, with a well-rounded nock, having long slender feathers of a green silk whipping (*doncaviad*), and a sharp-edged steel head heavy and thick and an inch wide, of a green-blue temper, that would draw blood out of a weathercock; and with my foot to a hillock, and my back to an oak, and the wind to my back, and the sun towards my side; and the girl I love best hard by looking at me, and I conscious of her being there,—I would shoot me such a shot, so strong and far-drawn, so low and sharp, that it would be no better there were between my quarry and me a breastplate and a Milan hauberk, than a wisp of fern, a kiln-rug, or a herring-net." Here is the true spirit of the English yeoman—yew-man, as some etymologists have derived the word—but a spirit requiring thews and sinews of no ordinary order to realise. It boots not probably to aspire to such a vision of Queen Mab; but the quiet student, the

hard-worked professional man, the gentleman who is conscious of a little deficiency of muscle, need not despair.

Archery as a sport is, next to angling, "the contemplative man's recreation." Its quiet, steady occupation, yet with abundant leisure for thought; its dependence not so much on rude physical strength as calm temper and steady nerve, above all, upon that easy and regular "loose" or "quitting" of the arrow which so often makes a weakling or a sedentary student superior to the impetuous or awkward performer; the remembrance that the best archer of the present century was not a powerful man, and gained his skill in hours of solitary practice, his only recreation from the engrossing cares of business,—all these tend to make the sport, what Ascham desired it to be, the solace of the leisure hours of the man of letters, historian, or philosopher (whom we have seen in Regent's Park), as well as of the Edinburgh jurist, or the country parson, or the holiday-enjoying

merchant. The exercise is beneficial in every way. "The man who would be a perfect archer," as a writer in a periodical paper in 1864 observed, "must study to be perfect in temper and in nerve; he must look for vigour and resolution; he must seek to be patient under his reverses; he must learn to take the roughest truths from his target in the gentlest spirit; he must know how to repent and begin anew; he must be neither elated by success nor cast down by failure; he must bear and forbear; for any undue emotion, whether in the fulness of pride or the exhaustion of despondency, will communicate itself through the ways of the heart along the fibres of the arm down to the tender points of the fingers which press the bowstring,—and those, therefore, who would shoot well, must have their emotions well under command. The cultivation of such qualities as these must be for the good of all society, and all society should be grateful to those who encourage it."

REMINISCENCES OF AN "ATTACHÉ."—PART III.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION OF 1867.

OF all the years that have impressed themselves upon the recollection, no year lives so fresh in the memory of those who were in Paris during its course as the year 1867, the year of the great International Exhibition, which it was intended by its promoters should outshine all that had preceded it, or was likely to come in the future.

From beginning to end it was one whirlwind of excitement, interest, and amusement; and only in the intervals of rest, which were but short, did a heavy feeling rise to the surface—a feeling that seemed to betoken something undefinable, but which boded no good.

It seemed as if the air was charged with electricity; as if shadows of coming events were being thickly cast over the gay city; as if the subjects of the Empire were being drugged and blinded, so that they should not rush open-eyed and clear-minded into the dangers looming ahead.

To us, however, strangers in the gay land, the succession of festivities which crowded on each other, the gorgeous display of hospitality which was prodigally bestowed, and the visits of every sovereign and his family which the world knew of, could not but produce thorough enjoyment, even if it entailed some fatigue; and the heavy atmosphere, which we could not help noticing, only added to our interest as the question arose, How will it all end?

To myself personally, I must allow that I had too many sympathies with the French, too many

friends among them, not to share the discomfort which they bore so restlessly; and I was not sufficiently Bonapartist at heart not to dread for France the moral blindness with which it was evident her rulers were seeking to strike her.

Be this as it may, the unexampled hospitality was profusely given to emperors, kings, sultans, viceroys, archdukes, grand-dukes, royal and serene highnesses, princes of the blood, and princes by title only; and it would take several volumes to do justice to the *fêtes* which were given in their several honours at the Tuileries, at the several Ministries of State, of Marine, of War, of Foreign Affairs, or at the various Embassies.

Among the latter, although the ball given by Lord and Lady Cowley inaugurated the series, it far exceeded in brilliancy those given by the Russian, the Austrian, or the North German Embassies.

Each ball, however, had a characteristic feature. The English ball was specially remarkable for its floral display; and as I write, I remember an amusing incident which is worth recording.

Some of us had been told off to receive at a different entrance some of the minor royalties, and carried bouquets to present to the princesses.

Presently we were informed that the Grand-Duchess — and her daughter had alighted. Off we hurried to receive them, and as neither of us had seen them before, were quite satisfied that the portly lady and young damsel by

her side were indeed the personages announced, though it struck me at the time that I had never seen so commonplace a young woman as the Grand-Duchess's daughter. To each a bouquet was duly presented; and Lord D——, doing admirably the honours, offered his arm to the portly princess, and we followed with her daughter.

As we passed the drawing-room, where the guests were assembled, I noticed a look of some surprise on many countenances; but we were too intent on our duty to pay much attention to this. On approaching the door, however, of the room reserved to royalty, wherein we were about to deposit the lady and her daughter, a groom of the chambers rushed up, calling out that we had made a mistake, and that the Grand-Duchess had just arrived.

We never stopped to verify the fact, but without a moment's hesitation we took the bouquets from our amazed companions, who a few minutes later could see us stately accompanying the real Grand-Duchess and her charming daughter, carrying the same bouquets which had done service before. How the mistake arose we never inquired, but it caused a good deal of merriment.

At the Prussian Embassy, Baron de Goltz was able to show his guests the great Chancellor of the fast-moving German empire, Prince Bismarck.

At the Austrian Embassy, the Princess Metternich had provided a novelty in the shape of Strauss's Band; and so inspiring were the waltzes played, that the ball for a long time bade fair to turn into a concert, so spellbound were we all by the inspiring strains of this wonderful band.

The Russian Ambassador, alas! M. de Budberg, had the misfortune

to give his ball on the night of the day when a dastardly attempt was made on the life of the Czar, and of course a gloom spread over the whole company present, and took away from the brilliancy of the scene.

How little could any one present at all these festive gatherings have dreamt that the general impression produced by each then was positively typical of what was to come!

The roses of the British Embassy were the forerunners of the great prosperity in England of the years that immediately followed.

The seriousness of the German ball was typical of the earnest work in store.

The light music of the Austrian *fête*, a token of its relative peace in the midst of wars around; and the gloom of the Russian entertainment, a warning of the Emperor's tragical end.

The opening of the Exhibition itself was not a very imposing ceremony, and indeed ought not to have been officially opened till a month later, as it was not nearly ready on the 1st of April; but the occasion was interesting and fatiguing.

Only people with tickets were admitted; and the public, who lined the avenue leading to the entrance, revenged themselves for their exclusion by comments of all kinds on those who were more favoured.

"Qu'est ce que c'est que ça?"

"Rien du tout."

"Et celle là?"

"Une Indienne."

When the lady we were escorting, and who had, English fashion, donned a sky-blue silk gown on a frosty April morning, came abreast of a French couple who were especially loud in their remarks, louder even than her gown was loud in hue, the woman said to her male companion—

"Ah, mon Dieu, regardez donc ! qu'est ce que cela peut bien être ?"

"Ah, ça," replied the man—"ça doit être la mariée du Mardi Gras."

We were in a fearful state lest our friend should have heard it ; but she showed no signs of having done so, and we were somewhat comforted for her sake—when, in the carriage on our drive back to Paris, she casually asked us whether we often went to the play.

"Certainly."

"And have you seen that most delightful of plays 'La mariée du Mardi Gras' ?"

Lady — had heard, but with consummate tact she conveyed to us the fact in the above happy manner.

Among the other sights of that

wonderful year, perhaps the most brilliant of all was the review given in honour of the Emperor of Russia on the 6th of June.

No less than 60,000 French troops defiled past the following sovereigns, and I copy from my journal the exact positions which they occupied on the occasion.

The march-past was on the race-course of the Bois de Boulogne, and opposite the three tribunes, in the central one of which were the Empress Eugénie, the Prince Imperial, her Royal Highness the Crown Princess of Prussia, her Royal Highness the late Princess Alice of Hesse, and H.I.H. the Grand-Duchess of Leuchtenberg.

In front of them, and on horse-back, were—

Grand-Duke Vladimir.
Grand-Duke Czarewitch.
Prince Royal of Prussia.

Lord Strathnairn.
Prince Gortchakoff. Prince Bismarck.

Duke of Leuchtenberg.
Prince of Mecklenburg.
Prince of Hesse.

NAPOLÉON III.

THE CZAR.

THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

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:

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Jockey Club
Tribune.

Imperial
Tribune.

Diplomatic
Tribune.

How melancholy are the reflections which this day recalls, and how little could any one beholding the sight foretell the enormous stakes which were soon to be played for by those who then witnessed this review !

The sullen impassive look of the German Chancellor was a thing to see by itself, and to reflect upon when seen in the year of frivolity 1867. The life of embassies and legations at that time was one of constant wear and tear, dressing and undressing, presentations and banqueting.

Each time a sovereign arrived, a diplomatic circle was summoned ; and when all were ready and the order of precedence was duly observed, then a Majesty was announced, and went the round, com-

plimenting the one, inquiring of another, and perhaps only bowing to a third.

When the late Sultan of Turkey became the guest of the Emperor at the Élysée, we were all in due course summoned to his august presence.

The British Embassy, being then bereft of its chief, Lord Cowley, who had resigned, and awaiting his successor, who had not yet arrived, was marshalled under Mr Ottiwell Adams, who was temporarily in charge of the Embassy, and had to take its place at the end instead of at the head of the diplomatic array.

This must have disconcerted his Turkish Majesty, for when he came to us, and he was informed who we were, he gave a low grunt ; but

Fuad Pasha, who was with him, immediately proceeded to inform us as follows :—

“*Le Sultan, mon auguste maître, me charge de vous dire qu'il est charmé de faire la connaissance des Messieurs de l'Ambassade de l'Angleterre.*”

What a glorious language, I thought, is that in which a mere grunt expresses so much! and if a royal grunt betokens pleasure, what must a royal word be equivalent to?

I could not at the same time help admiring the delightful Turkish composure of Fuad Pasha, with whom I afterwards became well acquainted, and whose ready wit, honest views, and English sympathies were valuable treasures to note in one of his eminent standing in his own country. Alas for his country and for us, this born statesman died in 1869 at Nice, predicting the fall of his own country and the coming war between France and Prussia, in a paper which he called his last testament, and which was addressed in the form of a letter to Sultan Abdul Aziz, the same mentioned above, and who died so fearful a death!

Tuileries balls, dinners, and soirees were as numerous as the days of the Exhibition; but in the midst of them the Emperor did not forget his old friend Lord Cowley, in whose honour he gave a grand dinner, at which the members of his staff were likewise commanded to attend.

This was my first opportunity of speaking to her Majesty the Empress Eugénie, of whose beauty, like all the world, I was a most devout admirer, and of whose amiability I from this moment became a positive worshipper.

Kind and attentive to all their guests, the Emperor and Empress

after dinner had a word to say to each; and I was delighted when, the bigger fish being disposed of, it was clear the turn of the smaller fry had come. But I was rather taken aback when, with such a pretty smile and a look which foreboded such pretty little phrases, I was suddenly asked by her Majesty where I intended to go on leaving Paris.

“Where the Foreign Office may choose to send me, madam—to China or Japan, maybe.”

“*Eh bien tiens, j'aimerais mieux cela.*”

“*Ne dites pas ça, madame, je vous prie, car c'est de très mauvaise augure.*”

“*Non, car les mœurs sont si différentes, les coutumes si originales, et cela doit être si intéressant.*”

There was nothing but to agree with her Majesty; but it was hard to think that the first words I had always so much desired to hear from her lips, were only the expression of a hope, for my sake, that I might go to China or Japan, as it was so unlike Paris—the Paris I had worked heaven and earth to be appointed to.

It was almost as bad as the equally kindly meant, but equally hard hit bestowed on me by another Royalty that same year.

“*——!*” said her Royal Highness; “that is the name of a Whig family in England?”

“Yes, madam.”

“Are you any relation of the British Ministers at —— and at ——?”

“Yes, your Royal Highness.”

“Is it not a good deal to have three of your name in so delightful a service?”

“I hope your Royal Highness does not regret it?”

“Not at all; but I think you should be grateful to the Conser-

vatives for allowing three Whigs to be all at once in diplomacy."

"But, madam, I don't count."

"But you may count some day."

"Then the Whigs may again be in power."

"Never mind the future—enjoy the present, I say; but bear in mind you owe your enjoyment to the liberality of a Conservative Ministry."

On another occasion I was not much more fortunate with a Prince to whom we were particularly anxious to be civil.

Seeing me come into the Embassy yard as his carriage drove in, Lord Cowley called me, and handing loftily a telegram which had just been handed to him, said peremptorily, "Take this and palliate."

In fear and trembling I took the telegram, and read as follows: "Offer to — the hospitality of England, but tell him that we have only Claridge's Hotel to offer his Highness."

Lord Cowley had disappeared: he was evidently disgusted with the message, and was not disposed to "palliate" himself.

I accordingly hurried to where the said Highness resided, and having explained that though rich in many things, we were very poor in palaces, and had only a comfortable and (expensive) hotel to place at his disposal, I returned with his Highness's thanks to everybody concerned.

Alas for my embassy! the message I had conveyed had aroused such a hue and cry in the English press, that when, two days after, I returned to his Highness to offer him another habitation, he, having read all the papers, almost turned his back upon me, and curtly replied that he would inform the Ambassador of his reply.

I had palliated, but I was snubbed for it.

From princes to clergymen there is but one step, for both are always treated with the same respectful attention.

Alas, however, for our demure English clergy! No less than seven British clergymen, all most respectable excellent men, but too modest by half for the French police, found a night's incarceration in a French prison the price of their modesty.

Seven times did they appeal to the Embassy to be got out, and seven times had I the honour of obtaining their discharge from an unmerited punishment; but while the frequency of my appeal on their behalf elicited from the victims a desire to raise a subscription for a testimonial in my favour—an honour which they afterwards wisely abandoned, owing to the reflection on their cloth such a testimonial might imply—I was met at the police station by the remark—

"Vos calotins Anglais, monsieur, sont pire que nos calotins de France. Ils nous donnent bien plus d'embarras et sont infiniment plus curieux de connaître les choses de ce monde."

But at last the year 1867 came to an end, with all its festivities; and not the least beautiful of all its sights was to witness in October the distribution of rewards at the Palace d'Industrie to the several meritorious poor boys and girls, who to the number of 10,000 had been gathered together from all the poor schools of Paris.

It was a task which befitted an Empress; it was one which could not have been more gracefully performed than by the Empress Eugénie.

CONVERSATION WITH THIERS, 1869.

In 1869 the Legislative Chambers in France were dissolved, on their constitutional six years of existence having come to an end; and full as was the air with dismal forebodings, it was felt that the general election which must follow the dissolution would reveal the general discontent.

At the same time, the Government, who shared these apprehensions, resolved upon minimising the evil, by manipulating the electoral districts so as to command a majority; and no Minister was better fitted for the task than M. Forcade de la Roquette, the Home Secretary.

This statesman knew full well that the multitudes were for the Empire, because the Empire could do more for them than any other form of government, and that the Emperor was pledged to work for the masses more strictly than any other ruler could be. The masses, therefore, were to be called upon to stand by their chosen sovereign.

Lest, however, the town populations were too much worked upon by seditionists of the Rochefort type, the rural populations were admitted into borough electoral districts, and majorities were thus secured which did not represent the true state of things, while the unrepresented minorities told the Government how hollow was the victory they had gained.

Napoleon's keen political instinct perceived at once that the jerry-mandering process of his Home Secretary, while securing to the Empire a majority of electoral suffrages, had, however, not been able to stifle the newly born fear that the Emperor's personal popularity was a thing of the past.

This feeling it was that gave

birth to those measures of semi-abdication which followed in July the interpellation signed by the whole of the Opposition, numbering some 120, against the continuance of personal government.

This interpellation was in reality the embodiment of all the grievances hitherto felt in the Chambers by such members of it who, smarting under the previous knowledge that do what they might they were powerless against the nominees of the Empire, had at last resolved to bring matters to a crisis.

Among these was the late M. Thiers; and a conversation I had with him in June, just previously to the elections, is, I think, worthy of record.

Imbued as I was, and everybody was, with the idea that the elections of 1869 might bring trouble in their wake, I wrote to M. Thiers to ask for an interview, which he most readily granted me in the words of the following letter, which I copy:—

"MONSIEUR,—Je serai tous les jours à votre disposition avant midi, prêt à vous donner tous les renseignements que vous pouvez désirer sur le sujet qui intéresse actuellement toute l'Europe.—Recevez l'assurance de mes sentiments les plus distingués,

"A. THIERS."

The "subject which now interests all Europe" shows at once the importance which M. Thiers attached to these elections; for if it be remembered that in 1869 almost every part of Europe had enough at home to occupy the attention of each, it will be gathered that the troubles of French parliamentary elections were but an addition to the general and prevailing anxiety.

The great questions of war, of the East, of revolution, of State bankruptcy, and of ecclesiastical difficulties, were all to the front, and none of them were settled.

A Franco-German war was dreaded; a Russo-Turkish war was feared; the spread of the Spanish revolution was apprehended; Italy's financial embarrassments were gloomily canvassed; and while the Protestant Church was being disestablished in Ireland, the great Catholic world was trembling on the threshold of an Ecumenical Council, from the decisions of which many would find that they had been severed for ever from the creed of their birth.

Still M. Thiers considered all this as nothing in comparison to the elections in France.

The letter, short as it was, impressed me most deeply in the sense I have endeavoured to describe above; and it was therefore with peculiar feelings rather of strong interest to learn his mind, than curiosity to speak with the illustrious statesman, that I was ushered into his presence on the 15th of June 1869.

M. Thiers is so essentially the property of history, and especially of contemporary history, that I have no need to describe him; nor could I do it, for his little person, which at times became so dignified as to visibly grow taller,¹ was indescribably elastic—and his affable manner, which gained for him the nickname of "*le brave Papa Thiers*," could at will be influenced by a degree of animation and passion which might well have made one doubt the propriety of the appellation.

For a man of experience, of learning, of marvellous talent, and

of wonderful perception of character, I don't remember ever meeting one who so curiously impressed me with the idea of his own self-importance—and I do not mention this impression as one by which I wish to abide in the least, for it is impossible to judge of any man by a single interview; but even in 1869, Thiers was so great a celebrity, that any note jarring on one's estimate of his great qualities was the more likely to strike and be remembered.

When I arrived, I had to wait some little while before I was introduced into a kind of gallery or long room, on entering which M. Thiers, who was near the door, made me a polite bow, while he affectionately dismissed another visitor with the words, "*Comptez sur moi; je n'ai jamais failli à mon devoir.*"

This was so sententiously said, that I felt snubbed even before the great man had taken stock of my bearing, which apparently did not much please him, since he began his conversation by making himself sure that I belonged to the British Embassy, ready to dismiss me had I not had those powerful credentials.

He was very talkative, and walked up and down the whole time, while I listened seated on a kind of stool of repentance.

"No wonder," he said, "that England takes an interest in our elections. They are, I can assure you, the most important we have ever had in France, and if I mistake not, they involve the ruin of the Empire.

"*Ce qui lui succédera je n'en sais rien. Dieu veuille que ce ne soit pas la ruine de la France.*

"But what I do know is, that

¹ I have seen since Mr Greville's Memoirs, in which he quotes a saying of Royer Collard: "*Savez-vous que Thiers est beau, . . . et qu'il a six pieds?*"

the state of things in which we live cannot continue long; that the voice of the people cannot be stifled any more; that the grievances of the middle classes cannot be ignored; and that it is incumbent on honest men to lay before the Emperor the true state of the country he governs, and which his Ministers strive their utmost to keep from his view.

"They hate me. Yes; to you, monsieur, I fearlessly say they hate me, because I know them and tell them what I know.

"For a long time I kept quiet and silent. It was no use knocking one's head against the wall. But now we have revolution staring us in the face as an alternative with the Empire; and do you think I would be doing well or rightly by my fellow-citizens were I to keep in the background?

"I am wanted, and I shall not fail." At this juncture somebody knocked at the door. M. Thiers, who, I suppose, was unaccustomed to be disturbed, called out, rather impatiently I thought, "*A tantôt votre tour;*" and turning to me, said very pointedly, "*Je reçois depuis six heures ce matin, et c'est comme cela tous les jours.*"

I offered naturally to go, but he retained me, and went on. "Yes, the Government would like me to be defeated—me, the defender of true monarchy and constitutional government. They have done their best towards that object: my *arrondissement* has been manipulated by M. de Forcade so as to lessen my old constituency and increase the number of the democratic vote, hoping thereby to weaken the candidates of order and disorder for the benefit of an Imperialist; or may be—for I don't believe they can put forward a candidate against me—they are so blinded as to hope for a democratic return ra-

ther than face my presence in the Chamber."

He said this with an air so sublime as to make me almost feel that his presence anywhere as an enemy was a calamity the Imperial party ought by all means to avoid; but assuming a less animated expression of face and manner, he said—

"But see what all this leads to! The Government feign a belief in the representative character of the Chambers elected by universal suffrage, and they have so little confidence in themselves as to tamper with electoral boundaries on the very eve of a general election, so as to spite the candidates who are not of their choice.

"*Vous avez en moi un exemple de la vérité de ce que je vous dit.*

"They look upon a majority as a very unlikely occurrence if universal suffrage were free, and they will boast of their hold on the country, when, as will probably be the case, their wholesale and shameless prostitution of the liberty of voting has succeeded; but mark my words, it is for the last time. *L'avenir, monsieur, vous le prouvera.*"

He had said all that he wanted to say, and had on the whole been sparing of epithets either injurious or sarcastic; but the animation which presided over the whole of this discourse, and the fire which twinkled right through a pair of spectacles, together with the pacing up and down the room, was a sight not to be forgotten then, and never to be erased from the memory after the melancholy years which followed this conversation, and during which were realised for a while his words, "*Dieu veuille que ce ne soit pas la ruine de la France,*" and he himself became so illustrious a workman in the work of remodelling and reconstruction.

RIOTS.

On the 10th of June 1869, the appeals of M. de Rochefort to the mob to assert their rights in his red-covered publication, '*La Lanterne*,' were answered by some fifty or sixty ruffians, who considered that the best way of proving their patriotism, their love of liberty, and their hatred of kings, was to smash whatever kiosks or lanterns or shop-windows came in their way or excited their envy; and as they accompanied these acts of vandalism by roaring the "*Marseillaise*," so as to disgust one of that very fine air, the rumour soon spread that "*Paris est en pleine révolution*."

It is a fact that, for the whole of that day and night, not more than a hundred discontented men of the lowest type actually kept a whole city of upwards of 1,000,000 inhabitants in a state of frenzied alarm, and filled the Boulevards with 30,000 or 40,000 onlookers ready to swell the ranks of order or disorder, according to the success of the lawful or the lawless, and at any rate adding to the general alarm by giving this ridiculous riot an imposing air of gravity.

On all the walls were placards calling on the respectable inhabitants to give law and order their support; while on the Boulevard St Martin cavalry in large numbers were massed, ready to charge the unoffending for the sake of securing one malcontent.

I hurried early in the afternoon on to the Boulevard, and found among the crowd M. C—, a writer and philosopher, who has since been made a member of the French Academy, and who, like myself and thousands of others, had been impelled to leave his home, his books, his thoughts, his occupations, to see what was up.

We went about together for a long time, deafened by the roar of an excited crowd, and awed by the large masses which surged to and fro as the patrols of cavalry advanced and receded.

A peculiar feature of the crowd was the absence of any exhilarating sign, such as a joke or a laugh, or some token of disbelief in the seriousness of the affair. All were apprehensive or expectant, and wore that peculiar look which suspense and anxiety give to the countenance.

The most sceptical blamed the Government, who, they said, ought to know better than to encourage such demonstrations; for it seemed to be a favoured notion with those we met that the whole riot had been got up to order, and that the police had considered it the means of rallying to the side of the Emperor those of the middle classes who were not believed to be friendly. It was argued that the fear of losing their property would rally to the Executive those who had no sympathy with it; and as a proof of what was alleged, it was pointed out that the placards calling on the citizens to maintain order were out almost as soon as any symptom of disorder had been manifested.

The sight was, however, very curious and very instructive. The mobile nature of the French showed itself in the quick manner in which each rushed from dread of revolution to hope of all coming right through the medium of the army.

"*Au moins*," said one to us, "*s'il n'a jamais rien fait pour la France, il a su organiser une armée pour maintenir l'ordre*."

How ruthlessly this man's opinion must have awakened to the reality if he lived to hear of the disaster of Sedan!

"Notre armée," said another, "c'est notre sauvegarde. Voyez ces beaux cuirassiers ça vous marchera sur un Prussien comme sur cette canaille."

Alas! the Prussian and the "canaille" both had their day only a short time after, while the cuirassiers were an annihilated body of men, powerless against a victor, and powerless against their countrymen.

"Ces pions, cette valetaille, cette louverie, ces coquins, ces scélérats," were the mildest terms used in speaking of the police, who, it must be allowed, though I say it with regret, were, in the days of the Empire, arrogant and brutal in times of security, and useless in times of necessity.

I saw many a woman and child roughly handled by these miserable, dressed-up puppets of the law, who smiled only an impotent smile when they came across a man with resolute purpose, and who seemed to set at defiance the law which they were there to protect.

But times are changed, and I trust they have improved. They "wanted it badly."

While my philosopher friend and I were thus going about gathering all the news we could get, we were suddenly stopped by a rush of people crying out madly to make way on account of a charge of cavalry.

M. C—— took to his heels in true philosopher fashion, and, I am bound to say, so did I. The only excuse we had was, that we could not resist the impetuosity of the surging mass that pressed upon us, and adopted therefore the only sensible course; but when we were safe in a by-street we stopped to take breath, and looking at each other, burst out laughing, feeling the absurdity of our position as we were flying for our lives—he a sedate

and well-known literary man, I a member of a foreign embassy.

"C'est bien fait!" exclaimed my friend, though I could not quite see in what we had done so well, when he explained that his legs had carried him better than he expected.

"Concevez vous," said he, "une position plus désagréable que d'être collé par un pion alors que l'on veut en bon citoyen aider à la cause de l'ordre. On vous aurait relâché, vous, comme étranger: mais moi, pensez donc l'auteur des P—— cloué à Mazas comme émeutier. Mon Dieu! cela me fait froid dans le dos rien qu'à y songer."

And we laughed over the predicament; but it had been enough for him, and we separated.

Meanwhile the cavalry charge had proved a false alarm, and with the intelligence my courage rose. I therefore made my way back to the Boulevard, and proceeded some distance, when I heard the disagreeable crackling noise of broken glass as it fell on the pavement. Hurrying on, I heard people commenting on the disgusting brutality of those who, at the risk of severely wounding the people near, were breaking with long sticks the coloured glasses of those pretty newspaper offices known as kiosks all along the Boulevards; and presently, some hundred yards ahead, I saw a man with a pole, which he was brandishing aloft, and which presently came down time after time upon the panes of an unoffending kiosk. I at once retreated to the kiosk which I believed would be next attacked by the blackguard vandal; and taking a firm grip of a big cane I had with me, awaited the arrival of the scoundrel, on whom I had resolved to revenge the outraged law, in accordance with the appeal made by the police to peace-

ful citizens. I had not long to wait ; but as if my resolve was to be strengthened for its purpose, just as the man with the pole was approaching, a policeman who stood near gave a kick to a little boy who was struggling to get free of the crowd, while the sight of the pole made him retreat from the presence of him who carried it. The ruffian had just lifted his pole to the level of the top pane of glass, when man and pole were levelled to the ground ; and believing I had hit him too hard, I was precipitating myself to his rescue, when I perceived a body of cavalry charging in earnest, and I had to get away as best I could.

To say that my night was sleepless is to state but a portion of the truth, for I lived many lives during that terrible night, and vividly before me rose man, pole, kiosk, cuirassiers, and police, until I was mad with shame and remorse, and the fear of having taken a fellow-creature's life.

As early as I could on the following morning I hurried to the Prefecture de Police, where I knew many of the officials, and narrated my sad story. Having told the occurrence as minutely as I could, books were brought to the Chef du Cabinet of the Prefect, who himself, poor man, had not been to bed that night, and we both pored over them to see whether, at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Rue Neuve des Capucines, any one had been picked up dead.

I can never forget the cold perspiration which ran down my temples as column after column we noted the list of casualties—all, I must say, of a trivial nature—and after reading through the list, being told that there was still one list to come in, and would I wait until it had, as it would not be long delayed.

Here was I waiting at the police

office for the doom which ought to place me under their control.

Half an hour went by before my friend came in with the list, which completed up to seven o'clock that morning all the accidents, injuries, and damages recorded during the night of the 10th and 11th June.

"Vous voyez," he said, "il n'y a pas de quoi fouetter un chat, bien moins de vous alarmer. Je suis savi pour vous qu'il n'y a pire à inscrire, mais là franchement si toute cette canaille avait été massacrée j'en aurais pas moins bien dormi pour le reste de mes jours. As to you," he continued, "you only did your duty ; and if we cannot be grateful to you for taking one life at least from these miscreants, some of the newspaper-vendors on the Boulevard will thank you for gallantly preventing their catching cold."

With these words I was dismissed by my friend, an excellent man and a most zealous servant of the Empire, whose name I have not since seen in the public press, and who therefore, I presume, has been swept away from notice like so many of those who believed the Empire to be the stepping-stone to higher things ; but for all that, I reflected over what I had heard in the crowd, and comparing their accusations of the part played by the police in getting up these riots with their own light heartedness in appreciating the accidents of that night, I could not but think very seriously of what I had witnessed, and conclude that although it would be difficult to believe, and perhaps impossible to prove, still it was not out of the region of probability that the people's judgment was right after all.

My conscience was eased by my visit to the police ; but my belief in the stability of the Empire as a Government was shaken most conclusively from that day.

THE CRACK OF DOOM.—PART V.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN Count Ramassy came down to breakfast at Ourania House on the morning after his epileptic fit, he was profuse in his apologies for the trouble he had given. He was not subject to such attacks, he explained. He must have the best advice at once. Could Mr Quickset recommend a doctor? He could think of nothing to account for the seizure but the too hospitable kindness of his friends in London, when his health, perhaps, had been a little shaken before. He would run down to the seaside for a few days to recruit. Which was the best place to go to? What chiefly distressed him was, that he had been the occasion of such a fright to Miss Quickset; he was afraid that she had suffered more than himself.

The Count, in fact, was so persistent in his apologies as to become tedious and embarrassing, and Quickset had to exert himself to pass over the incident lightly. He told what he knew of the history of the crazy fellow who had been disturbing the peace of the neighbourhood night after night with his insane cries. He must speak to the police about it. "We are too tolerant of such eccentricities in London," he said. "If the man were drunken, the policeman would run him in at once; but because he has the excuse of religious fanaticism, he is allowed to do as he likes. I must give Mr William Popkins warning that I have stood him and his nightly salutations quite long enough. Even if he had the excuse of religious zeal, it must be kept within bounds. But I know the fellow well. He

is a vain, crackbrained creature, and would do anything for the pleasure of being stared at. This freak of shouting at night might do any amount of harm to nervous people."

"In which category you will reckon me, I am afraid, after last night's exhibition," said the Count.

Quickset waved this aside, and continued: "You were asking about a good seaside place. I am going to Slagsalve-on-Sea for a few days myself before the meeting of the British Association."

"Where is Slagsalve?"

"A watering-place on the north-east coast, near Norport. I was attracted to it first by the mention of a telescope-room in the principal hotel. That was rather a sell, as the telescope was broken before I went there, and they did not think it worth while to get it repaired. But it is a good hotel, and a fine breezy, bracing place. I have gone there several times to recruit, and it will be very convenient this year being so near Norport."

"I had half thought of going to the meeting of the Association myself," the Count said; "and I will certainly go now that I know you are to lecture."

"You could not do better than spend a day or two at Slagsalve before. I have only passed through Norport, but the smoke there must be very trying."

The conversation presently passed on to pictures. "Your friend Miss Douglas paints extremely well," the Count remarked to Miss Quickset. "Great talent, in fact."

"Her pictures are delightful to me. But she is even better as a critic. You can't conceive how amusing she is as a critic. I am going with her to the Grosvenor Gallery this afternoon, and I expect such fun. I quite look forward to it."

Mr Quickset laughingly acquiesced in his daughter's estimate of the lady's satiric talent. It had never been exercised on himself. But he considered it necessary to say that he did not approve of omnivorous satire, and that Miss Douglas was inclined to carry it to excess. He was afraid—quite needlessly—that Grace might take her as a model, if he was too unqualified in his approval.

"But, papa," said Grace, "it is not a question of approving of what Miss Douglas says about pictures or of agreeing with it; you can only laugh. She sees the funny side of everything."

"A dangerous gift," said the Count, gravely.

"For the possessor," assented Quickset.

"But so very amusing," pleaded Grace, in defence of her friend. "I never have a dull minute with Fanny, especially in a picture-gallery, when she is in good vein. There is something so refreshing in the way she says things—so catching. Even when the things are ill-natured—I mean, sound ill-natured when you repeat them—it never strikes you that she says them out of ill-nature."

"You see, pretty Fanny's way is peculiar," said Quickset.

"I can't express it properly. I can't tell what it is; but somehow she seems to enjoy it so much herself."

"As the boys enjoyed throwing stones at the frogs."

"Come, papa; I believe you men are afraid of her, because you don't

know what she may say about yourselves."

Quickset laughed and rose from the breakfast-table. The Count took his leave soon after with reiterated apologies and thanks. He had not forgotten the plan formed last night. The fit had not driven this from his memory. His mind was set in the direction of the City when he left Ourania House.

On the way he called at his hotel and asked if there were any letters for him. There were none; but a lady, who seemed very anxious to see him, had called no less than three times—about six o'clock last night, then again just before they closed, and once more this morning. "Shall I give her any message, sir, if she calls again?" asked the porter. The Count was inwardly enraged; but he did not allow this to appear, and only said in a voice of indifference—"Tell her I shall be here to-morrow morning." He at once divined who the lady was, and formed a shrewd guess as to her object in wishing to see him. It was his mother. Mrs Rorke had gone home with a report that had excited her. The adventurer was sadly embarrassed by these relations of his. Why could they not let him alone! Mrs Brockley herself could not have preached more eloquently than he at this moment about the inconvenience of having a mother. And yet in the midst of his anger at her interference, he was not so hardened as to be able to escape a certain feeling of shame. Old associations were awakened, and pricked his conscience.

But the shame was only a transient feeling, and was not strong enough to cause a moment's hesitation. A much more disquieting influence, as he drove to the City and neared the scene of his pro-

posed operations, was the reflection that he had the vaguest possible ideas as to the nature of those operations. He had heard of "selling bears" and "speculating for the fall," and he fancied that this must be the right thing to do when anything was about to happen that would depress the price of stocks. This was the effect that he anticipated if a scare should arise about the comet, going on the general idea that great depressions are always the result of panics. But when he asked himself how he should broach the subject to a broker like Bob Douglas, a practical man—how he should instruct him to sell a "bear," and what it should be a "bear" of—he felt all at sea. The practical man might only laugh at him. If the practical man did, could he still proceed on his own convictions, and could he do anything without being able to pay money down or give satisfactory references or hard proofs of his own solvency? These considerations crowded in upon him as the cab took him along through the rattle and roar of the Strand and Fleet Street and up Ludgate Hill. Every time the cab passed from the shaking rattle of granite blocks on to the comparative quiet of the wood pavement, his scattered fears seemed to concentrate and sweep down and press closer on him, close almost to suffocation. But as he was carried nearer the spot for action, he plucked up his sinking courage. "Bah!" he cried to himself, "ignorance often does better than knowledge. A little knowledge of details is a dangerous thing. I know next to nothing. I am safe." And all along Cheap-side he smoked tranquilly, trusting to chance, ready for the worst, but in confident expectation of the best.

Count Ramassy found that Mr Robert Douglas had a much more assured manner on the floor of business than in his sister's studio among his sister's fashionable friends. There was a something in his way of receiving the Count which showed the latter at once that the visit was accepted as having a business object, and that the broker had no time to spare for friendly palaver.

"I have come on business," the visitor said, with a smile. "You remember that comet we were speaking of yesterday? Do you think it is likely to affect the stock market?"

"Um," said Mr Douglas; "it had not occurred to me. What influence do you suppose it likely to exert?"

"I can conceive various ways in which it might develop dangerous energy, if a fright once takes hold of the popular fancy."

Mr Douglas looked doubtful, as if he were unable to conceive any one of them; and the Count, recalling on the spur of the moment O'Connor's historical conversation at the luncheon-table of the Junior Pantheon, resumed—

"For example, people of wealth, if they thought the end of the world was coming, might consider it judicious to make large contributions to charities; and to do this they might have to realise."

"More likely to make over to charities the flimsiest stuff they had on hand," said Mr Douglas, with a grin.

"Not if they were really frightened; and unless they were frightened, they would do nothing. But don't you think it possible, for instance, that a man from the provinces, say, who has made a fortune quickly, and has had thoughts of doing something handsome for his native town, might

think the time come for a church, or a public library, or an almshouse—something to show that his intentions were good, something to quiet his conscience if he was not altogether at ease in remembering how his money had been come by? The inward monitor is apt to become very urgent when there is anything like a panic."

"No doubt," assented Mr Douglas, after a moment's reflection, "if a rage for making princely donations should set in, a quantity of stocks of all sorts and conditions might be shot on the market."

"You would wade ankle-deep in them," said the Count, his imagination warming with this encouragement. "Of course I know very little about those things; but I have no doubt there would be many complications such as a man of practical knowledge and sagacity might foresee. Safe investments would probably be in demand—stocks such as might decently be offered to charitable institutions. But indeed it might not be easy to say what was safe and what was not. All sorts of rumours would be current as to what part of the earth was likely to be struck by the comet, and national stocks would fluctuate in consequence."

"The market, in that case, would be in a glorious state of instability," said the broker, who had something of his sister's hardness of nerve and liking for troubled waters.

"As an outsider, of course I cannot pretend to judge what the results might be; but I thought it worth while putting the contingency before you as an expert."

"From the way you speak, I judge that you don't yourself expect any serious consequences from the comet."

"To the earth, you mean?"

"The market is another thing, of course," said Mr Douglas, with a smile.

"Nobody knows," said the Count, shrugging his shoulders. "We are in the hands of Providence."

Mr Douglas was irreverent enough to smile at this expression of piety. "But you are not alarmed yourself?"

"Certainly not."

"And you want me to sell a bear for you?"

"I think that is the technical name for such an operation as I should contemplate. I should like to see a little of all sorts of English life while I am in the country."

"And perhaps carry off a little spoil from the Egyptians?"

"It is the most desirable way of purchasing experience."

"You can hand over the proceeds to a charitable institution."

The Count did not encourage this jocularly. He took it with impassible gravity. "Well," said Bob, having too much respect for the distinguished foreigner to pursue a line that led to no response, "what is it to be?"

The Count supposed that this was an invitation to declare his terms, and collected himself for a cautious advance. After a moment's grave deliberation, he said, "Of course I take all the risk; but if the speculation succeeds, you are welcome to half the profits."

Bob laughed, and the Count was for a moment dismayed, thinking he had not offered enough. But Mr Douglas quickly reassured him. "Oh, that is not our way of doing business. In an affair of this kind, I simply pocket my commission. I only wished to know what stocks I am to operate in."

"In that I must trust to your judgment. I am entirely in your hands. I may say that I should like to operate on rather a large scale. I can afford to risk a good deal; and as I am not likely to speculate again, I may as well get some excitement out of the transaction."

"Well," said Bob, after a little consideration, "if the comet doesn't come off, you can go pretty deep without much danger. Things are tolerably steady at present. Without standing to lose much, as things go you might make sure of a big haul in the event of a panic."

The Count's heart beat fast at this confirmation of his hopes. He preserved outward calm with an effort. He hesitated to make another move lest the fair prospect should collapse. Mr Douglas presently relieved him from his difficulty. He rang the bell for a Stock and Share List, and proposed that they should proceed at once to fix the area of their operations.

"I trust entirely to your judgment," the Count said again. "I am the merest novice in such matters."

An Englishman's respect for a lord does not always extend to the foreign peerage, but Bob's respect for the Count's title was such that he felt flattered at the confidence reposed in his judgment. And he gave the novice credit for knowing more than he professed. It never occurred to him to doubt the genuineness of a character which, as he knew from his sister, was sustained with credit in the most respectable society.

Before the Count left his office, the broker had received instructions to sell for his client "bears" to the amount of two millions. When it came to the selection of the stocks, Bob's courage had risen to rashness.

"You are quite sure about the comet?" he said, when he had chosen stocks to the amount of forty thousand or thereby, in which he thought there was not the slightest danger of a rise.

"I saw it myself last night."

"But about its coming in the way of the earth?"

The Count smiled. "Of that I cannot be sure, because I have not verified Mr Millerby's calculations. But it will certainly be given out that such is the lie of the orbit."

"The lie!—I see," cried Bob, with a knowing grin.

The Count was annoyed by this facetiousness, but he affected to laugh. "You mistake me," he said. "I mean that this provisional orbit will be given along with the first mention of the comet. And the fact that my observation agrees with this calculation, will of course be a strong presumption that it is right."

"Oh!" said Bob; "you found it just where he expected, did you?"

This question rather startled the Count, because he was supposed, by the Quicksets at least, to have discovered the comet by intuition, altogether independent of Millerby's ephemeris. But he reflected at once that the broker knew nothing of this, so he answered—

"Certainly. In the very spot."

This produced a great impression on Bob, though the suspicion did cross his mind that the Count might have been interested, in view of this speculation of his, in finding the comet in the very spot.

"And this will also be made public," he said. "If it were made public, whether it was right or wrong, it must have a great effect."

"No doubt," said the Count. "It is too important a fact to be kept back, though it does seem a pity to frighten people about what, after all, can do them no harm."

The broker smiled pleasantly, and pondered a little. "Well," he said, after a short pause which seemed very long to his visitor, "there certainly cannot be much danger of a rise. The comet can't send the stocks up, and it may send them down. Do you think we might go deeper?"

"I must leave you to judge for me. For my own part, if you think there is little danger of a rise, I must say there seems to me great probability of a fall."

"I am inclined to agree with you. I don't see where a rise is to come from. The railway dividends can't send the market up, I happen to know. More likely to send it down. I think we are safe to go as deep as we like." And he went on selecting till the total had reached nearly two millions.

"You will want some guarantee, I suppose, that I am able to pay if I lose?" the Count ventured in

a quiet tone, as if this would present no difficulty.

"We generally have a cover, when we don't know our customers," the broker said. But he was reassured by the Count's manner, and added, "Merely as a matter of form, of course. But it would take some trouble to raise a big enough cover for this, and I will dispense with it altogether in your case."

"But really it is not fair," persisted the Count. "You don't know me, and you would have to pay if I were insolvent." He smiled at the word, as if the idea amused him.

"Yes; I should have to stump up. But I am not in the least afraid. The thing strikes me as so good that I shall sell a considerable bear on my own account."

"I admire the way you City men deal with such enormous sums," the Count said, as he withdrew. "It is truly imperial."

CHAPTER XXII.

As the Count drove back from the City much inspirited by his morning's work, he began wondering whether Hugh Millerby had yet seen his brother Stephen, and whether that amateur had brought any further news about his comet. Stephen might have made another observation before coming up. But it mattered very little to the Count now. He felt quite at ease about that. Everything now depended on Hugh's article, if a good scare was to be established. If it were known that he, making an independent observation, had found the comet exactly where, according to the original calculations, it ought to be, the accuracy of these calculations, and of the data on which they were founded,

would be confirmed to a degree that nothing could shake in the public mind. Experts might argue that the correctness of the clocks of the two observatories had not been verified, and that till this was done there was still a possibility that the coincidence was accidental. But this nicety would not weigh with the public. Millerby was sure to have seen to the correctness of his sidereal clock; and even if Quickset's proved to be wrong, that would hardly affect the impression produced by the Count's observation, if this were once prominently before the public. As he had not been able to verify Quickset's clock at the time, it could be argued, and it would be universally believed, if any error

were discovered now, that the clock had gone fast or slow after the observation, and must have been quite right when the observation was made. And any controversy on so small a point as this would only increase the interest in the comet.

The Count, then, must get his observation before the public, at its highest value, as a corroboration of Stephen Millerby's ephemeris. He drove, therefore, to Hugh's rooms. Hugh had gone out only twenty minutes before. Had his brother been there? Did the landlord know his brother? The landlord did know Mr Stephen Millerby; he had called, and they had gone out together. Did he know where they had gone? Had they gone to the club? The landlord did not know. The Count drove to the club. They were not there.

What was he to do? True, he had Stephen's ephemeris in his pocket. But then, he was supposed to have sent this off by post to Vienna. Without it, he could not make any use of his own observation except as an isolated fact. The great strength of the fact lay in its confirming the original calculation, and he had professed to discover the comet by instinct. He must get hold of the ephemeris somehow, without contradicting his previous story. "I have it," he said at last, to himself. "The positions have been telegraphed back to me from Vienna. I must be losing my wits not to have thought of it before. That fit must have muddled my brains."

He drew up a little paragraph for the 'Times,' and made a copy of it for Raspian. He did not mention his own name in the paragraph; it ran simply that an observation made on Thursday

night in Professor Quickset's observatory, exactly corresponded with Mr Millerby's computation of the orbit. Then Count Ramassy went to the Pantheon, on the chance of meeting the editor of the 'Sphinx,' to tell him by word of mouth what had happened. But before doing so, he left a short note for Hugh Millerby at the Junior Pantheon, to say that he had been hunting for him everywhere that morning, to take him to lunch with the Austrian Ambassador. He calculated that this would flatter Hugh, and would serve to keep up appearances. Glenville was not likely to mention that he lunched at the Pantheon, if they happened to meet there. If he did, there would be no difficulty in getting out of it somehow.

Meantime, Hugh Millerby was thinking more about his own private concerns than about the Count. When he got up that morning he was in excellent spirits, thinking over his article for the 'Sphinx,' wondering whether Glenville would cut it about much, laughing so that he almost cut himself in shaving when he remembered Bellowin' Bill and his pranks. But the handwriting of one of two letters that lay on his breakfast-table made his heart jump with surprise. He opened it hurriedly and read:—

"DEAR MR MILLERBY,—I don't know that I ought to write to you—indeed I am almost sure that I ought not; but you looked so unhappy yesterday that I cannot resist it, and I am quite certain you will not misunderstand me. I could not bear to see you so unhappy, and to think that it was on my account. I like you so much that I am very sorry I cannot like you as you wish. You

must not be unhappy about me. I am not worth it. Remember how little you know about me, and how much better it may be for you that I gave you the answer I did. I could not give a different answer to anybody. I am quite happy as I am with my father, and do not wish to change. I sometimes think that I may not know the value of what I am throwing away, for I do like you very much, only not as you wish; and it grieves me to think that I am the cause of your unhappiness, and that I must have been to blame, otherwise you would not have spoken. One is so little able to do what is right at my age. One makes so many blunders and gives so much pain without any intention. I was so happy in our friendship till you spoke. I wish we could have gone on as we were. But you must not think that my answer could ever have been different. I am certain of that. I don't ask you to forget me; only do not think of me unkindly, and do not vex yourself about me. Think of me always and only as your sincere friend,

“GRACE QUICKSET.

“*P.S.* — Do not answer this letter, as papa would know that I had written, and would think that you would misunderstand me.”

“What an angel!” said Hugh to himself, and was more in love with her than ever. He read the letter again and again, trying to extract ultimate hopes from it, and, strange to say, he succeeded. The truth is, that the only way a woman can undeceive an infatuated lover is by marrying somebody else. Till that happens he must be strangely wanting in imagination, whatever she does or says, if he does not persuade him-

self that he has a chance. And Miss Quickset even avowed that she was not in love with anybody else. “I could not give a different answer to anybody else.” Who would despair in such a case? Certainly not a sanguine youth like Hugh Millerby.

He put the letter down with a sacred determination to persevere. Then he turned to the other letter. The address was in print characters, and this tempted him to look at the post-mark. It was the same as on Miss Quickset's letter. He opened it and found the image and superscription which we saw Miss Douglas making in her studio—a dove with a billet in its mouth bearing the legend *HOPE*.

The malicious humorist's little plot was superfluous. Grace's letter, of which she knew nothing, had undesignedly done the business of luring him on with misleading encouragement. The dove and the invitation to hope were superfluous, and, in the circumstances, not a little puzzling. If there had not been a letter from Grace herself, the young man was infatuated enough to have fallen into the trap. But the anonymous symbolical message could not be from her. From whom, then, could it have come? He could not tax himself with having paid any very special attentions to anybody recently. Who could it be? And what did it mean? Did the legend apply to him or to the sender? Did the sender declare her own hope, or write to stimulate his? Did the dove bring hope from her or to him? It was a delicate attention in either case. He felt decidedly flattered. Men are such fools.

By-and-by a light struck him; and he was convinced that he was right when, taking from his shelves a book recently illustrated by Miss Douglas, he found there the very

identical bird. But what could she mean by it? He had indeed flattered himself that he was not personally displeasing to that young lady. But why should she ask him to hope? He had never despaired, or, as far as he knew, looked in the least like despairing. And even the manly Fanny could hardly go so far as to propose to him in that way. Yet it was undoubtedly from her that the missive came. The internal evidence was overpowering. What could she mean?

He was still puzzling over the problem with a certain sense of amusement, when his brother Stephen came in. He had called the previous evening, but Hugh had metaphorically "sporting his oak," in order not to be disturbed over the article; and though Robbins knew him, and offered to show him in, he had respected the prohibition, and gone away, not a little tickled at Hugh's portentous industry. Though there was so much difference in age between the two brothers, there was the utmost intimacy and cordiality of feeling between them. Hugh admired the solid masculine force and ability of his elder; and the elder, in his turn, found something refreshing in the more mercurial disposition of his junior. There was thus the best of understandings between them, and they took great enjoyment in one another's company when they met, which was now but seldom.

"Well, how does the old man take the comet?" was one of Hugh's first questions.

"He doesn't say much about it, but it seems to have impressed him a good deal. I told him of it only two mornings ago. He was hard at work at the Apocalypse again when I left."

"You are pretty sure of your observations as usual, I suppose?"

"Oh yes; I think they are all right. But one may easily make mistakes in the computation. But what's this you've been doing to Quickset? He writes to say that he can't stay with us now, and that we are to ask you for the reason."

"The devil he does!" cried Hugh, crimsoning, and glancing involuntarily at the letter on the table. "There was no occasion for that. Of course I should not have come."

"That's all right. You'll come now. But you are surely not in correspondence with another already, are you?" he said, indicating the letters with his umbrella. "That looks like a female hand from this distance." Stephen had but a poor opinion of his brother's constancy, whether in love or in business.

"Oh no," said Hugh. But he looked so confused that Stephen mercifully forbore to chaff him further.

"You sent my computation to Quickset, I suppose?"

"I did. That is to say, I gave them to a friend to take. But there has been a miscarriage, unfortunately." And Hugh explained how the Count had bungled the matter, and how they had telegraphed to Hardhill after Stephen had left.

"Pity," said Stephen. "I have brought only a note of the ephemera with me. In fact I didn't make a copy of my calculations."

"Why didn't you send it to the papers, as other people do? Just like you."

"The truth is, that I might have sent this; but the old man, for some inscrutable reason, rather made a point of not letting it be known at first till my observations had been confirmed."

"Considering that his original intention in building the observa-

tory was to give the world warning, that is very curious."

"It is. He seemed to think at the last moment that it would be wrong to frighten people till we are quite sure; and I told him there was still plenty of time."

"But really you ought to publish, my dear fellow. It's not fair to yourself. You have done work enough for half-a-dozen reputations."

"There are plenty famous men without me," said Stephen. "Who is this Count Ramassy?"

Hugh told him all he knew about this interesting stranger, and after a time he rose to go. "Won't you come and lunch at the club?" said Hugh.

"Thanks; I have an engagement to lunch," said Stephen, with a little guilty embarrassment.

"Where?" Hugh bluntly asked.

"Your friend Mrs Brockley's."

"Do you know Mrs Brockley?" asked Hugh, with surprise.

"Oh yes; I knew her years ago."

"And Mrs Darby Rorke?"

"I knew them when I was at Cambridge—as long ago as that," said Stephen, with an assumption of indifference. "But I have not seen them since. I met Mrs Rorke yesterday by the merest accident. I promised to lunch

with them, and take them to the Grosvenor Gallery."

Hugh's astonishment increased. "I wonder why they never said they knew you." Mrs Rorke, as we know, had a reason; but her mother's reticence was not so easily accounted for. She liked little secresies and mystifications. "I remember one day," Hugh continued, "the old lady said something I had done or said was just like my brother; but she professed afterwards that it was my mother, and I thought nothing more of it."

It was Stephen's turn now to get redder in the face than the heat of the room would account for. "Ha, ha!" cried Hugh, laughing confusedly; "Quickset told you my secret, and now I have got a bit of yours. All right, old man, we're companions in misfortune. It evidently runs in the family."

Stephen prepared for escape by putting on his hat, but the younger brother suddenly cried that he was coming too. "I may be able to take the old dragon off your hands. The dragon and I are great friends. I am sure she will be glad to see me." And in spite of Stephen's laughing protestations, his brother persisted in bearing him company.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The dragon, after all, gave very little trouble. She was very voluble during lunch. We should form quite a wrong impression of her character, if we supposed that she was in any way put out by her not having mentioned to Hugh Miller by her previous acquaintance with his brother. She could not get over it with consistency, seeing that immediately on hearing his name she had claimed acquaint-

ance with his mother. But consistency was a quality for which she had a supreme disdain. Her mind was too active to have time for it. "Is it not surprising," she said to Hugh, "that it should never have occurred to me that you were Mr Stephen Miller's brother? We knew him so well at Cambridge. But then, you see, it is a very long time ago. How many years? Let me see,—

well, perhaps I had better not count. Still, it was very dull on my part. But I am rather a dull person, Mr Millerby, am I not? Ah, quite the contrary, of course. I shouldn't have given you that opportunity for saying something agreeable. I am sure you don't require it. Then the likeness, too," she continued, looking from the one to the other, "though of course you are a good deal younger,—no, not so much better-looking as you think,—there is a decided family likeness. I must be losing my memory. What a thing it is to grow old! '*Postimy, Postimy*,'—you know the quotation."

They went to the Gallery in two detachments, and Mrs Brockley and Hugh arrived first. As they arrived at the bottom of the stairs, they saw Count Ramassy at the top on his way in. He was in the act of raising his hat to somebody in the room beyond. "There is Count Ramassy," said Hugh; "I must introduce Stephen to him."

Mrs Brockley, stopping as if to wait for Stephen and Mrs Rorke, disengaged her watch with nervous and fumbling hand. "Dear me, what a time we have been over lunch! How you make me talk, Mr Millerby! Would you believe it? It is past four o'clock. I don't believe I shall have time to go in after all. It's not worth while for five minutes, is it? I have such a quantity of shopping to do, and I must be home before six. Business first, art afterwards, Mr Millerby; and I see I have not time for both this afternoon. Will you tell Cecilia that I have gone? Good-bye, Mr Millerby. We shall see you soon again, I hope." And she was off before Hugh had time to say a word in deprecation of this sudden change of purpose.

Thus relieved of his dragon, Hugh walked in, and was present-

ly taken possession of by another. Count Ramassy had made a mental note of Miss Quickset's expressed intention to visit the Grosvenor in company with Miss Douglas. When Hugh appeared on the scene, Miss Quickset, very doubtful in her own mind about the propriety of her impulsive letter, and afraid that he might wish to speak on the subject, was all in a flutter lest he should have an opportunity; shook hands with him nervously; and to cover her confusion moved off with the Count to a picture in which she was interested, leaving Hugh to the tender mercies of the redoubtable Fanny. He, forbidden to write, had thanked his stars when he caught sight of Grace for this chance of saying a word to her—only a word, to let her know that he was grateful for her kindness, and did not in the least misunderstand her. But this obvious anxiety to avoid him was disconcerting. He had got another dragon on his hands. He must watch an opportunity for transferring her to the Count.

Miss Douglas watched him with much glee. She thought her symbolical missive had taken effect even beyond her anticipations. Although she did not say, "I see your disappointment," she conveyed this meaning to his mind in directing his attention with the remark: "I should like to buy that picture. It is an unfailing joy to me. I could come here every day only to look at it."

It was a painting of Prometheus gnawed by a vulture, by a painter of greater ambition than faculty. "A fearful joy, I should think," said Hugh. "To me it is merely revolting."

"So it would be to me, if it were not irresistibly ludicrous. He does try hard to look as if the vul-

ture didn't hurt—does he not?—and as if a time would come. And the vulture—isn't he having a happy day? They do keep the sacred lamp of burlesque burning in this shop."

"I don't see the fun of it," said he.

"I daresay not," said she, drily. "As for me, I resist such clumsy attacks on my feelings."

"Oh, come!" said he; "I never heard you lay claim to such a property before. I back you to defend them well."

"Don't you be personal, young man. I don't wear them on my sleeve, as some people do."

"This Prometheus, for example," said he.

"But seriously" (and she assumed the tone of a serious connoisseur), "there are some subjects that are not suited for painting, and some of these ambitious people don't seem to know where to draw the line. There are such things as impossible subjects. Now nobody can possibly put Prometheus on canvas."

"When you begin to lecture, I am all attention. I ask, with all the submission of Paul at the feet of Gamaliel, why?"

"You are not exactly Paul, though I may be Gamaliel."

"Is that the reason?"

"Would Paul have caught up Gamaliel like that?"

"Would Gamaliel have snapped at Paul like that? But I drop the comparison, because it threatens to deprive me of your exposition. I am not Paul and you are not Gamaliel; but why can't Prometheus be put on canvas? It has been attempted, you know."

"Yes; but it can't be done. All the mysterious grandeur of the subject goes off like a mist when anything in the likeness of a man is put before you. You can

think and speak of his agony, and his defiance of Jove, and his hope of ultimate triumph, and all that; but when you try to put it all into the visible image of one set of the features—much better leave Prometheus to the poets."

"Given the requisite imagination and technical skill," said Hugh, "I don't yet see why it should be impossible for painters. You wouldn't have imagination banished from painting altogether. I grant you that this thing is little better than a caricature."

"No caricature could be half so good," said she, with a chuckle.

"By the way," said he, "speaking of the sacred lamp of burlesque, I have a curious thing to show you."

"What is that?"

"I think I have it in my pocket." And he produced an envelope, the address on which she recognised with some astonishment. What could have come over the man? Was he so piqued at Grace's retreat with the Count that he was going to make fun of her valentine? She was so firmly convinced, after what she had seen, that he supposed it to come from Grace, that she jumped at once to this conclusion, and it pleased her.

"Some imagination there," he said, as he handed her the sketch.

She saw at once from his look that he suspected her, and looked at him keenly to see if she could divine what construction he put upon it. The absurdity of their mutual glances of suspicious inquiry struck them both simultaneously, and they began to laugh, much to the indignation of an admirer of the picture before which they were standing, who was disturbed in his rapt contemplation by their noisy merriment.

"What is the meaning of it?" he asked. It suddenly flashed

across him that this woman, so clever, so full of life, so charming at times when the light of mirth was in her eyes, and so obviously interested in himself, might after all be rather an entertaining companion for life.

It was an involuntary fancy, raised for a moment and dismissed as soon as it appeared, but the alert Fanny divined from his looks something of what was passing in his mind. He supposed she had sent the dove out of sympathy, and the silly simple man—such is the weakness of the vainer sex—could not help being a little touched by it. Was she to have the benefit of the rebound after all? The question seemed to have come within the region of practical politics. The absurdity of his mistake, and the new turn it seemed to have given to the situation, tickled her immensely; but she smothered her laughter, and tried—with only half success—to speak in a serious and significant tone.

"You mustn't ask me what it means," she said. "Who is that with Mrs Rorke?" They were passing from the east gallery into the big room with the crimson walls, and saw Stephen and Mrs Rorke sitting in front of the space assigned to Millais's contributions.

"My brother," said Hugh. "I am told we are rather like."

"From my present commanding view of his back, I am not able to judge," said she. "Let us go round and take him in flank. Mrs Rorke looks rather unhappy. Ah! I see the reason why."

Mrs Rorke had turned her head, and was looking down the gallery. Miss Douglas followed the direction of her eyes to where Count Ramassy stood very close to Miss Quickset at the farther end, apparently in earnest conversation about one of Mr Burne Jones's

masterpieces. Miss Douglas attributed the sad looks of the novelist to jealousy.

"What is the reason why?" asked Hugh, not having the same facts in his mind, and consequently not being able to draw the same inference so quickly.

"I must say," said Miss Douglas, not answering the question directly, "Grace does seem very much interested in the Count's conversation. He professes to be very profound about painting."

"But what interest should that have for Mrs Rorke?"

"The Count and she are old acquaintances."

"How do you know?"

"I don't know, but I guess; and I am sure of it from their manner, and more sure of it now than ever. I know that he knows her husband."

"Who told you that?" Hugh did not like her so well when she was in her scandalous vein, and he put the question in a sceptical tone.

"Himself. You see my information is thoroughly sound." She was a little piqued when he received this with an ostentation of not being interested in the fact, and gave him something sharper next.

"Do you know, I think Grace Quickset is about the most perfect flirt I have ever seen. Look how animated she is, and how pretty she looks when she is animated! I don't believe she cares twopence-halfpenny for Burne Jones's angels."

"I believe Grace Quickset to be a thoroughly good-hearted girl," said Hugh, thinking of the letter he had read that morning.

"The best of it is," continued Miss Douglas, "that she would be most indignant if you accused her of flirtation."

"She doesn't mean to flirt."

"We never mean to do anything

bad," said Miss Douglas, sententially. "I don't think Quickset used you well in that matter. He wants to marry her to Adam Napier. I can see that easily enough. It was too bad——"

"Would you care to know my brother?" asked Hugh abruptly, moving towards Stephen and Mrs Rorke. Miss Douglas had quite undone the effect produced when she was in her most pleasant mood. "A life with such a woman would be a purgatory," he said to himself now.

"Excuse my speaking so frankly," said she, in a low earnest tone. "But they didn't use you well, you know. I was really angry about it on your account. Yes, I should like to know your brother. Pray introduce him." She really liked

Millerby, and was penitent for the moment, and quite humble and affectionate, though she could not keep off this disagreeable topic when the militant mood was on her.

The Count and Miss Quickset presently came up, and the conversation became mixed and general, and does not further concern our story. All that concerns us is, that before Stephen Millerby parted with Mrs Rorke he had obtained her consent to see her again on Sunday before he left London. Hugh did not succeed in getting an opportunity of saying a word in the ear of Miss Quickset; but as she went home with Miss Douglas, that entertaining woman regaled her with a vivid description of the suspicious behaviour of Mrs Rorke.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mrs Brockley called next morning at St James's Hotel, and found her son in at last. There had been almost a quarrel between her and Mrs Rorke about him after the visit to the Grosvenor Gallery. Mrs Rorke had gone home in a state of great sorrow and distress. From what she had seen it was evident that he was making violent love to Grace Quickset, and that the girl was not displeased with the assiduous court paid to her by the distinguished foreigner. She might not be seriously impressed—it might be nothing more than a girl's passing fancy for an agreeable and handsome man; but the astute Fanny was not wrong in remarking that she listened to him with interest, and replied with animation. There was no saying how far such a beginning might go, if the man was sufficiently heartless and unprincipled. To trifle with the girl's feelings was

bad enough, but would he stop at that? Why should he go out of his way to pursue her unless he had some serious design? and that design must be evil.

Mrs Rorke felt bitterly ashamed, and wretchedly unhappy at the disagreeable duty that seemed to have been cast upon her. She must give Mr Quickset warning. Was she, then, prepared to sacrifice her own brother? Better that than allow him to play the part of a successful swindler, which could only end in shame and ruin. He had been so full of promise once, so affectionate to her, such a dearly loved companion. All that was over, and could never be again. But it had been, and it had left its impress on her heart, and twisted itself up with the innermost strands of her being, and it could not be torn out and flung away without a terrible struggle and agony.

What poison had passed into his

blood? There are diseases of the mind and heart that are tenfold more virulent and disastrous than any bodily disorder. Physiologists may be right in saying that they are diseases of the nervous system, incident to the neurotic type: at any rate, they seem to be infectious. A young man perfectly upright in his conduct is brought in contact with them, and by some insidious subtle process they pass into his system, develop with frightful rapidity, wreck the settled moral order, seize the reins of power, and establish a ruinous dictatorship.

Some such thing had happened to her unfortunate brother. Could he not be saved without exposure, and instant and irretrievable disgrace? Was it for his sister to take the initiative in bringing him to infamy? Her own life had been marred by a weak and unprincipled man. Why should she interfere to save others? Why not give them a bitter welcome to the tortured company of sorrowful women? For a moment Mrs Rorke felt savage and revengeful—for a moment bitterly indifferent; but her heart soon revolted. She could not allow this bright young girl to be thrown away as she herself had been. Grace Quickset must be saved somehow.

Full of this resolution, Mrs Rorke told her mother what she had seen and what she feared, amidst many interjections of vexation and grief from that excitable woman. But when she added her firm conviction that it was their duty to put Mr Quickset on his guard, the mother flashed out in violent and scornful rage.

"Put him on his guard! Put him on his guard against your own brother? against my own son? Cecilia, have you no natural feeling? Oh! what can I do when

my own children turn against me? Unnatural woman! Cecilia, I am ashamed of you."

"Don't be angry, mother. It is very hard for me, and it must be harder for you. But we must do what is right. We cannot allow him to bring ruin into an innocent home. Knowing what we do, we should be morally as guilty as himself, and it would be no service to him to let him go on as he is doing. We know what it must end in."

"Don't come to me with your cant about innocent homes and moral duty. It can't be your duty to turn against your own flesh and blood. It's a fine thing, no doubt, to have so much delicate consideration for others. But your own innocent home has the first claim. Duty indeed! I don't need to be lectured on my duty. Nobody can accuse me of having neglected my duty to my family. As if I didn't know my duty! You ought to be ashamed to set yourself up to lecture your mother about her duty. You will tell me next that it was my duty to have prevented you from marrying Mr Reginald Darby Rorke. I wonder you don't say that. I have no doubt you think it. I, who have done so much and suffered so much for my children, to come to this!" And she burst into a loud fit of weeping and wailing.

"Mother," said Mrs Rorke sadly, when this paroxysm had subsided, "you know I don't reproach you nor lecture you; but——"

"Oh yes! you have good reason. Of course I am to blame. It is all my fault. It is from me that all poor Tom's wickedness comes, no doubt. He takes after his wicked mother, who doesn't know her duty."

"I beg of you to listen to me for a moment calmly."

"It is all very well for you to

be calm. Poor Tom's dangers and his mother's misery don't affect a well-balanced mind like yours."

"Do be merciful, and hear reason."

"It is you that ought to be merciful, sitting there calmly and proposing to consign your brother to the felon's dock."

"What, then, would you have me do?" asked Mrs Rorke, in despair. "Leave Tom to find his way there for himself, working as much harm as he pleases to innocent people—harm for which we should be morally responsible, because we might have prevented it?"

"That's how the land lies, is it? It is our precious selves that we are thinking of after all—the disgrace to us! If I couldn't live with my husband, I should hold my tongue about disgrace."

There was a limit even to Mrs Rorke's patience. "Mother," she said, with quiet firmness, "you have never spoken like this to me before, and you know you have no right to do so. But understand me. I have made up my mind in this matter. I will go and see Tom, and if he declines to drop this imposture and go back to his work, I will put Mr Quickset on his guard, whatever the consequences may be, and whatever pain it may cost me."

Mrs Brockley saw that she was in earnest, and became more reasonable. "Have I not tried again and again to see him?" she whined.

"Then I will write to him if I cannot see him. I should have done so before, but I was willing to hope against all my suspicions."

"Oh no, no! Don't do that. You can't tell whose hands it may fall into. I will go again—to-night—at once. I will watch all night at the door for him rather than let you write."

It was agreed that Mrs Brockley should make another attempt that evening to see her son. "Tell him," said Mrs Rorke, "very plainly what my intentions are."

Count Ramassy was not in when Mrs Brockley called at the hotel, but she got his message from the porter, and came back comparatively triumphant and hopeful over this little morsel of encouragement. She called next morning according to the appointment, and was admitted at once to the Count's sitting-room. It was luxuriously furnished as became his rank.

As soon as the door was shut, Mrs Brockley, who hitherto had tried to look as like an indifferent visitor as possible, summoned into her face the most doleful aspect that she could command, and sank into a chair with her eyes fixed reproachfully on her son. He advanced to her briskly and cheerfully—

"Well, mother, you have found me at last. How sorry I am to have missed you so often!"

She turned away her head, and shook it slowly. To look like Niobe all tears was her intention.

"Why, dear old Mum, what's the matter? Are you ill? Has your walk been too much for you? Shall I get you a glass of wine?"

He put his hands on her shoulders, and bent down to kiss her. She silently resisted these endearments for a little, jerking her head to one side when he put his mouth down, but with increasing signs of relenting, he smiling all the time and saying, "Won't you?" and "Not yet?" At last she yielded. "That's right!" he said; and she threw her arms round his neck and cried, "O Tom, Tom! you'll break your mother's heart."

"Not just yet a while," said he, gaily. "Why, what have I done now?"

"What have you done, Tom? What have you not done?" said his mother, affecting a tone of grave rebuke, but inwardly nearly, if not quite, reconciled to her fascinating boy. "Why are you here under a false name? And in such grandeur," she added, looking round the room.

"I told you already that it was only a lark." He felt that it was a mistake to have lost his temper in their last interview, and determined not to make the same mistake again.

She shook her head mournfully, and repeated in a tone of incredulous sorrow, "A lark!"

"Now then, dear old Mum, you make your mind easy about that. What a silly old Mum it is, to be sure, to be so easily frightened! Why shouldn't I call myself Count Ramassy, or any other Count? Who's a penny the worse for it?"

"Grace Quickset!" She spoke in a stern significant tone, and lifted her eyes suddenly to his with a glance which she used all her force to make piercing. He certainly staggered under this thrilling *coup*. "Aha!" she cried, waving her hand theatrically, "Grace Quickset will be a penny the worse. You see I know more about your doings than you suppose."

"This story comes from Cecilia, I have no doubt."

"It does. And Cecilia bids me tell you that if you don't drop your false name and go back to Vienna at once, she will expose you to Mr Quickset."

"Cecilia should mind her own business," he said, pacing the room angrily. "Why should she interfere? What business is it of hers?"

"I assure you she is very determined about it."

"She will find I am as determined as she is."

"But you would not abuse the innocence of a confiding girl, would you, my boy? Ah, Tom, Tom! I could not believe it of you."

"I should certainly be a better husband to her than Mr Reginald Rorke has been to Cecilia. She mustn't judge of every man by him."

"Yes, Tom dear, I am sure you would be a good husband," she said, soothingly. "But under a false name, you know. You could not do that. It would not be honourable. It would not be lawful. You will not disgrace your poor old mother, Tom? You will go away, won't you? There's a dear good Tom. You will go away, won't you?"

He paced the room as she spoke to him in the tones she had used in the perverse moments of his childhood, standing up with clasped hands to give effect to her entreaties. He took no heed for a time; then suddenly he stopped, and said to her with an easy laugh—

"You are really giving yourselves a great deal of unnecessary trouble on my account. Cecilia is quite out for once. I leave London in less than an hour."

Mrs Brockley gave an exaggerated cry of joy, and threw herself into his arms.

"Hush!" he said, giving her a perfunctory kiss, and depositing her in a chair. "They will hear you outside."

"And you are really going?" she said, in a submissive whisper.

"Unless you put me late for the train. My things are all packed and ready."

"I knew it was only for a time. And you will come back in your own name, Tom, and be much more famous in that than you could ever be in any title. It is such a relief."

"Why wouldn't you believe me

at first, instead of making all this botheration? It was only a bit of fun,—just to see how easily people could be taken in with a title. Didn't I tell you so at first?"

"You did, Tom."

"Why didn't you believe me then? Why would you have it that I must have come to swindle people, like any common impostor?"

"Well, Tom, you know," said his mother, apologetically, "if you had come and told us when you arrived, we should not have been afraid of anything wrong; but you know you didn't come till Cecilia met you at Mr Raspian's,—and you had been in London for some time before that."

"It might have raised suspicion if I had been seen much with you just at first, and spoiled the whole joke. But I am going now, and I will tell you something that may please you. I have swindled nobody of a farthing. I have lived like an Austrian nobleman entirely at my own expense. And I am in a fair way to making a fortune."

"Not under your false name, Tom, I hope?"

"The false name has nothing to do with it."

"Not in that Company of Reginald's that Cecilia heard you talking of at Miss Douglas's?"

"Cecilia seems to hear and see a great deal too much. But that is Reginald's own affair. I have nothing to do with it. Guess again. Of course you would never

guess. You have not seen an article in to-day's 'Sphinx' about a comet that is coming to destroy the world, I suppose?"

"I have not. But your riddle seems to be as hard as the Sphinx's," said she, proud of an opportunity of displaying her classical lore.

"I am going to make a fortune out of that comet. Queer thing to make a fortune out of, isn't it?" he added, smiling at her bewildered looks. "I will tell you all about it when I come back, perhaps with a real title. Tell Cecilia to keep her mind easy. Good-bye, now." He looked at his watch. "I have just time to catch my train."

"One moment, Tom. You will write to your poor dear mother? You will write as soon as you get there?"

"Where?"

"Vienna, of course. Of course you are going back? O Tom, you are not deceiving me?"

"My dear mother, you will insist on making me late. Of course I am going back."

"Straight?"

"Not quite in a bee-line. But what does that matter? I am going back. All this fuss is really as unnecessary as it is annoying. There! I will write at the first stage. Will that content you? I *must* be off now. Good-bye."

Mrs Brockley went home perfectly satisfied and triumphant, to crow over Cecilia's fears and her own superior wisdom.

THE GREAT BRITAIN INDUSTRIAL COMPANY.

THE annual meeting of this important Company was held the other day in the Cannon Street Hotel. Mr John Bull, the Chairman of the Board, presided, and there was a large attendance of shareholders, including a number of well-known public men. Before the business began, the room was a scene of great bustle and excitement. The shareholders gathered in groups, and engaged in eager discussion among themselves. At times the argument grew warm, and was enforced with a considerable amount of shouting and gesticulation. The subject of their differences appeared to be the annual report of the Company, which, judging from the opinions expressed on it, was by no means satisfactory. In fact, the result of the year's operations had been discouraging, and the management of the Board was being severely canvassed from various points of view. In only one or two departments had profit been realised, while others had simply made both ends meet, and some of the largest showed a heavy loss. The net balance on the year's working would not yield more than a nominal dividend, and the Board recommended that it be carried forward. This was the bone of contention among the dissentient shareholders, who ultimately ranged themselves in two rival camps, and took possession of opposite sides of the hall. They were both well provided with war-cries and party emblems, which they brandished in each other's faces. The crowd on the right side of the room was the smaller of the two, but it made the most noise. It was evidently disgusted at the state of affairs, and insisted on some sweeping changes in the administration of

the Company. It protested that things could not go on much longer as they were doing, that the Company was not getting fair-play from its neighbours, and was making itself ridiculous by giving them everything they liked to ask for, while they gave it as little as they could in return. These and many other assertions were bandied about with great vigour. Here and there banners were waved bearing such mottoes as "Free Imports are not Free Trade," "Do to others as they do unto us," "Reciprocity is the Golden Rule of Commerce," "Tax Foreign rather than Home Manufactures," "The Cheap Loaf means Cheap Labour."

The last sentiment had reference, as we speedily discovered, to a number of imitation loaves stuck on the end of long staves, which the opposite party were swinging about. They were being regarded with great veneration by the people in their neighbourhood, at which we could not help wondering, for most of the loaves were somewhat mouldy, and the bearers of them did not look at all overfed. On the same side of the hall other emblems and quaint devices were shaken over the heads of the crowd, and lustily cheered. A picture of a man digging with a Birmingham spade, and an inscription underneath, "The Soil is the People's," was saluted with enthusiastic shouts. Another portion of this crowd cheered and hurraed a picture of a showy building marked "Free School." The noise became deafening when a red-nosed person hoisted a banner inscribed "Free Public-House." Away in a corner by themselves was a little knot of grave-looking men, who held aloof from these eccentricities, though

they did not seem to altogether disapprove of them. They were professorial of aspect, and did not attempt to conceal their self-esteem. Most of them had their pockets stuffed with buff-coloured pamphlets, and wore on their arms a buff badge, which we were told belonged to a certain association called the Cobden Olub. They affected to ignore the noise and confusion that were raging around them, and took no interest in the proceedings, unless to cast a contemptuous glance occasionally at the crowd opposite, who were shouting against free imports. When this failed to wither the malcontents with scorn, one of the Cobden philosophers would draw a buff-coloured pamphlet from his pocket and throw it at them. At first it had a quieting effect, but the remedy had to be so often repeated that its administration grew tiresome. The philosophers were fast losing patience, and the row was growing terrific, when a door opened at the back of the platform, and the directors made their appearance, headed by the chairman. In an instant all was silence, and a hush of expectation settled down on the tumultuous assembly.

The Chairman, on rising to open the business, was received with cheers and a few scattered hisses. He observed that in explaining the position of the Company, it would be necessary for him to enter somewhat freely into details; and in order that his remarks might be easily followed by the meeting, he had caused to be prepared two special abstracts exhibiting the nature and extent of their transactions.¹ The first was a summary of the profit and loss accounts of an average year, distinguishing the operations of each branch of the Company's business. The

other was a summary of the net revenue accounts, showing how the net profits of the year were allocated among the different classes of shareholders. He then proceeded with his statement:—

"You will see, gentlemen, from the figures before you, that your Company is now transacting business to the very considerable extent of about 1400 millions sterling per annum. It is a great agricultural undertaking. It owns and works extensive mines and fisheries. It is by far the largest manufacturing enterprise in the world. The distribution of your products gives employment to a great army of merchants, brokers, and other traders, whose profits form a substantial item in the Company's income. You possess also a magnificent mercantile marine, which is the envy of the world. In days gone by it has been a fountain of wealth for the Association. Nowhere were the energy and courage of your merchants rewarded more richly than on the high seas; but of late the sea, like the land, has been niggardly of its harvest. Then again, your Association is a great financial power. It has surplus funds which it invests by millions at home and abroad. Always ready to promote the progress of other countries, it advances money to them to build railways, to improve their harbours, and to develop their natural resources. These operations abroad entail greater risk than we have to meet at home; but in past times they have been highly profitable, and let us hope they may become so again. Whether at home or abroad, we must evidently be prepared for larger risks than in the good times we now look back on with regret. It is an inconvenient, but at the same time a natural principle, that

¹ These will be found at the end of our report, on p. 831.

as profits decline risks should rise. Hence our present difficulty is twofold. Not only does good business pay badly compared with what it used to do, but there is greater temptation thrown in everybody's way to go into bad business. Our agricultural produce is estimated, you see, at 200 millions sterling for a normal year. You may think that small, as no doubt it is, for the annual harvest of three such countries as England, Ireland, and Scotland; but the ruinous prices of wheat, wool, and beef now prevailing, have further reduced our agricultural income by at least 20 millions sterling. This year 180 millions sterling will be a liberal estimate of its value. Divided over 70 million acres of land, the area of the Three Kingdoms, that gives not much more than 50s. per acre as the aggregate return obtained from our farming operations. Time was when a smaller annual production realised in the market at least 50 millions sterling more. It will be admitted, I think, that that is no trifling sacrifice which our agricultural shareholders have been called on to make. Proceeding next to our mining department, you will find it credited with a gross out-turn of 61 millions sterling. These are official figures, and represent the money value of 160 million tons of coal, and 24 million tons of other minerals raised during the year. In this one industry, we have 564,000 of our workmen shareholders employed; and they have also been special sufferers in the hard times we are passing through. It is somewhat consoling to come next to a branch of our business which, unlike all the rest, is expanding. Our sea-fisheries are progressive, and on the whole prosperous. Their annual yield is now estimated officially at 11 millions sterling; and if it were twice

as much, the home market could absorb it all to advantage. These three industries—agriculture, mining, and fishing—may be distinguished as the raw-produce section of our business. They are estimated to be worth to the Company, in normal circumstances, 372 millions sterling per annum, and a decline of only 10 per cent in the selling values of their produce means a loss to us of nearly 40 millions a-year. About two and a half millions of our workmen shareholders are entirely dependent on these three industries.

"Turning now to our manufacturing business, you will observe that it is divided into two groups. The first embraces what may be called primary manufactures, the objects of which are feeding, clothing, and housing the population. The conversion of vegetable and animal products into food gives occasion for the baker, the butcher, the brewer, and a host of other purveyors, whose united industry is rated at 34 millions sterling per annum. In other words, the preparation of food from the raw material costs very nearly £1 a-year for every man, woman, and child in our community. More than twice as much, however, is spent on clothes, in the mere making up of which we employ over a million people, paying them between 30 and 40 millions sterling a-year in wages. Our tailors, milliners, dressmakers, and kindred artists, earn among them an annual income which may look high at 80 millions sterling; but it includes a considerable export of ready-made apparel. That section of our shareholders distinguished as the "building trade," creates for us in normal seasons new property to the extent of about 70 millions sterling a-year. At the present low values it is no doubt a good deal less; and our loss in this

department, estimated at only 15 per cent, would exceed 10 millions per annum. What I have thus described as the primary manufactures of the Company contribute to its annual income the very substantial amount of 190 millions sterling. Including unskilled labourers, the number of our shareholders employed in, and dependent on, them cannot be much less than two millions.

I proceed now to the industrial manufactures, in which the great mass of our skilled labour finds occupation. It is strange, and I think hardly to our credit as a practical community, that so little should as yet have been done to obtain exact information about the volume, value, and distribution of our manufactures. As you may see in the Profit and Loss Account, they embrace a dozen or more great industries, the out-turn of which ranges from 3 millions to 100 millions sterling per annum. Their aggregate, as near as can be ascertained from the imperfect data at command, ranges from 400 to 420 millions sterling. This branch of our book-keeping has hitherto been far from worthy of us; and the uncertainty which prevails as to the actual volume of any of our home manufactures is not to be wondered at, considering the very little trouble that has been taken to get them measured from year to year. In one or two trades, our fellow-shareholders who are directly interested have made the attempt to keep a record of production for themselves; but though a large quantity of sound data may have thus been collected, large gaps yet remain to be filled up. The one staple manufacture of which we can speak with any approach to certainty is cotton. Its annual out-turn has been repeatedly estimated by competent authorities at 100 millions sterling, and that may be taken

as a fair average. Our woollen manufactures have been subjected to a similar scrutiny, though of a less thorough kind. The estimate for them of 40 millions sterling a-year does not rest on very precise data, but is the best that can be got until we improve our statistics of domestic industry. The valuation we put on metals is also to be regarded merely as approximate. Up to the smelting and rolling stage, our statistics of iron are almost perfect, but there they break off abruptly. With suitable agencies it would be quite practicable to continue our registration of this important industry from the pit-mouth to the consumer's door. At present its annual value to the Company has to be roughly guessed, and the best information we can obtain puts it at from 90 to 100 millions sterling.

"Metals, cotton, and wool stand far ahead of our other industrial manufactures. The only secondary staple that comes near them is timber, our manufacture of which we estimate at 30 millions sterling a-year. Few of our industries have made more rapid progress than printing. In the good times it advanced with giant strides, and even depression cannot altogether arrest its march. It now represents an annual income of 18 millions sterling, fully one-third of which goes to our workmen shareholders. Our gross income from skilled manufactures is set down at 415 millions sterling; and it supports nearly, if not quite, five millions of workmen. It ought, besides, to yield fair interest on 1200 millions of manufacturing capital, and to leave a moderate margin for our manufacturing members with which to maintain their establishments, pay taxes, meet losses, and cover risks incidental to times like these. There is too much evidence that it is not doing so at present. Putting together

the results arrived at for raw produce, primary manufactures (food, clothing, housing), and skilled manufactures, we have a gross total of 977 millions sterling a-year—in round numbers 1000 millions—as the measure of our productive industry. This means that on every lawful day of the year over 3 millions sterling of tangible wealth is created by us. As fast as commodities are brought into existence, they must be marketed, and turned again into money. In order to keep the vast machine of production going, raw materials have to be bought and paid for, wages have to be advanced to our workmen shareholders, and huge establishments have to roll smoothly on, with every wheel well oiled, and every man at his post. All this needs money. The working of a vast organisation like ours is a continual clamour for money—and ever more money. Nowadays few manufacturers can afford to keep goods on hand for a week. They must be sold forthwith if the producing machinery is not to be brought to a standstill. If it is an astounding reflection that a single community should produce at the rate of 3 millions sterling in every twenty-four hours, it is still more astounding that day by day and week by week such masses of commodities should be forced into consumption with so few serious difficulties.

“This brings me now to speak of our foreign trade. About three-fourths of our total production is consumed at home, and for the remaining fourth we have to find markets abroad. In the past year we exported raw produce to the extent of $13\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, and articles of food and drink to the value of 11 millions. As regards our skilled manufactures, we sent abroad nearly 110 millions sterling worth of yarns and textile

fabrics, over 37 millions sterling of metals and hardware, 13 millions sterling of machinery and mill-work, $10\frac{3}{4}$ millions sterling of apparel, and $37\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling of miscellaneous articles. The aggregate of our manufactured exports was $218\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, making a grand total of close on 233 millions sterling of our produce marketed abroad. In the same period we imported foreign produce to the value of nearly 390 millions sterling; and it may give you a faint idea of the extent to which our purchasing power has been crippled, when you hear that this amount shows a reduction of 36 millions sterling as compared with the preceding year. Our imports from abroad are of two essentially distinct classes. One consists of food-stuffs and other articles, which pass directly into consumption and become part of the personal expenditure of our members—a subject not now before us. The other includes raw materials and semi-manufactured goods, which come under the operation of our home industry and reappear as part of our industrial production. Our statistics of foreign trade, skilfully framed and instructive as they are in many respects, give us as yet no definite clue to this important distinction. We may trace it roughly, however, up to a certain point. The amounts paid abroad for food, drink, and tobacco, estimated at $162\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, and for manufactured articles $53\frac{1}{4}$ millions sterling, may be dismissed at once as personal expenditure. On the other hand, all imports classified as raw materials, which were valued last year at $127\frac{1}{4}$ millions sterling, must be taken into our industrial account and deducted from the annual value of our domestic manufactures. Two classes of imports remain to be dealt with which must

be regarded as mixed. Under the head of 'Metals' we have an importation of 16½ millions sterling, and under 'Chemicals, Oils, and Miscellaneous Articles,' 30 millions sterling, part of which is industrial and another part purely consumptive. Metals, for instance, would include copper in bar and in various stages of manufacture. A sufficiently exact analysis of these two mixed classes may be made by taking one-half as industrial, and adding for it a sum of 23½ millions sterling to the raw materials already specified (127½ millions sterling). The result is a total of 151 millions to be debited against our home manufactures for materials purchased abroad.

"Our merchants derive, of course, a considerable revenue from the distribution of these home and foreign commodities. In normal times it has been our practice to estimate 10 per cent profit over-head as necessary to cover expenses, taxes, interest on capital, and a fair margin for the trader. Our commercial shareholders will be able to judge for themselves how far they are at present from that traditional average. They turn over for us 1000 millions sterling a-year of our own produce, of which, as you may remember, one-fourth is exported, leaving about 760 millions sterling for home consumption. The distributor's profit on the home trade should therefore be 76 millions sterling. Our whole foreign trade for the year, exports and imports together, amounted to 622 millions sterling, on which the distributor's profit should be 62 millions. Our purely commercial income ought to be about 138 millions sterling, subject, however, to the debit, which you will see on the other side of the account, of 25 millions sterling for bad debts.

"Closely connected with this department is our carrying trade by

land and sea. It brings in altogether about 125 millions sterling a-year to the Company,—that is, from goods traffic exclusive of passengers. Of this, our railway, canal, and road traffic yields fully 50 millions sterling, earned at an average of 50 per cent of working expenses, and expected to give to our shareholders who are directly interested in these undertakings, a return on their capital of 24 millions sterling a-year. In ordinary circumstances our shipping freights should be good for from 70 to 80 millions sterling a-year; but at the present moment they do not bring in within 20 per cent of their normal average. On the other hand, working expenses have been vastly increased by excessive additions to our mercantile marine. It is very doubtful if this branch of our business is just now yielding us any profit at all; more probably it is being carried on at an actual loss. The accounts before you show a nominal surplus of about 5 millions sterling, which you will all admit is a very poor margin to bear the cost of management, depreciation, and taxes, to say nothing of interest on an invested capital of 130 or 140 millions sterling. As men of business, we may surely hope that over-competition so flagrantly ruinous as this, will not be very long in curing itself.

"The last item I have to refer to in this part of the accounts is your investments, home and foreign. Under this head we have to distinguish capital employed industrially, and the interest on which falls to be debited to industrial profits, from capital existing in the form of public securities, foreign loans, and miscellaneous investments abroad. Of the latter class we possess an aggregate of 2500 millions sterling, distributed over

a very large and varied range of subjects. Fully one-half of it consists of Consols, India stock, Colonial and municipal bonds. On the next level to these, we have bank and insurance stocks, and other gilt-edged securities, worth, in the aggregate, a good many millions. After them comes a promiscuous assortment of foreign government bonds, American railways, and speculative rubbish, sinking step by step down to Peruvians and Costa Ricans,—worth nominally a few pence in the £ as gambling counters. Then there is a class of real property not used for industrial purposes, which may also be regarded as an investment,—namely, dwelling-houses. The house property of the Company comprises over seven million separate and distinct tenements, the annual value of which is assessed at about 130 millions sterling. Those used as factories, warehouses, &c., have been valued at 48 or 49 millions sterling; consequently we have nearly 80 millions as the annual value of our dwelling-houses. The latter, at a moderate capitalisation, would represent 1500 millions sterling, and it is credited in the accounts with a revenue of 60 millions.

“The gross income of the company from agriculture, mining, manufacturing, trading, and investment should be in a fair year about 1400 millions sterling; but this is subject to very considerable deductions, which you will find stated on the other side of the account. The first is for raw materials obtained from abroad, to the value, as already explained, of 151 millions sterling. Next there has to be set off the working expenses of our railways, canals, and mercantile marine, amounting to 96 millions. Provision has also to be made for losses in trade through bad debts and insolven-

cies, as well as on investments through swindling and speculation, for which joint-stock finance gives nowadays such dangerous facilities. The insolvencies in England alone have in some years amounted to 30 millions sterling. Last year—the first of Mr Chamberlain’s Act—they were reduced to about 14 millions; but that reduction is now well known to have been purely illusive. Private arrangements with creditors increased in an equal, if not greater, degree than public bankruptcies declined. Assuming that they were only one-half of the bankruptcies, the losses from this cause in England alone would be from 20 to 25 millions per annum. For Scotland and Ireland allow another five millions, and, after taking into account the small residuum of assets which survive liquidation, we have to write off 25 millions for the year’s losses from insolvencies. Unfortunately for the investor, he has no Court of Bankruptcy to protect him from his innumerable spoilers. No official attempt is ever made to reckon up the mining frauds, the rotten land speculations, the bogus patents, and other joint-stock thievings of which he is the victim. In estimating that he is plundered to the extent of 20 millions per annum, we are far from overstating the facts. These deductions, to which our gross income is liable, aggregate nearly 300 millions sterling, leaving us with a net income of 1108 millions.

“Next observe how our net revenue is disposed of. The first claim on it is that of the Government for taxation. Good times or bad, the tax-gatherer is always with us, and the share he claims of our hard-earned income grows from year to year. Our imperial taxes, exclusive of the commercial revenue of the Government from the Post-Office and Telegraphs, now average

75 millions a-year. It is hardly necessary, and it may not be welcome to remind you, that in the current fiscal year there will be 15 millions of war taxation to add to the already gigantic total. Then our local authorities seem determined not to be left behind. Last year they extracted from us in rates, tolls, dues, and miscellaneous imposts 48 millions sterling—making, with tithes and imperial taxes, a grand total of 130 millions sterling. The second charge on our net revenue is for interest on the capital employed in earning it. Whether a person puts his own money into an undertaking, or borrows it from some one else, interest has to be provided for before he can speak of profit. This Company has invested in its various enterprises, exclusive of investments proper, a capital of 5600 millions sterling. Fully one-third of that is sunk in landed estate, which at the best of times pays only three per cent, and just now is probably not yielding more than two per cent over-head—a shrinkage of 20 millions sterling in the incomes of a single class. Our land-owning shareholders, it should be here explained, are in a different position to our other shareholders. Strictly speaking, they get only bare interest on the money they have invested, and that at the very smallest rate. They make no profit whatever, nor receive any reward for personal services, though the management of a large estate is never at any time an easy task. Our farming and mining capital is estimated at 800 millions, and is charged five per cent interest, that being the lowest rate at which Banks are accustomed to advance on such security. The most difficult class of capital to assess is that employed in manufacturing. It comprises buildings, plant, stocks on hand, and a legion

of other items, which have all to be separately valued. It is probably within the mark to take them *en bloc* at 1200 millions sterling. The same complexity characterises our trading capital, which has likewise to include buildings, stocks, and appurtenances. It is reasonably valued at 700 millions sterling. When we come to railways and shipping, we find ourselves on firmer ground. The known outlay on the former is a little more than 800 millions sterling, and adding 120 millions for our mercantile marine, we have over 900 millions of capital sunk in our carrying trade.

“Thus our industrial capital amounts to 3600 millions sterling, the annual charge on which, at five per cent, would be 180 millions. Interest on 2000 millions of landed capital absorbs 60 millions, and on 2500 millions of invested capital 140 millions—in all, 380 millions. Of our net revenue fully one-third must therefore be regarded as due to the accumulated savings of past years, and is not to be confounded with our own actual earnings from day to day. Deducting interest and taxation—together, 510 millions—from 1108 millions, we have 598 millions left as the share divisible among workmen, manufacturers, merchants, and all our other industrial members. In other words, that was the amount of new wealth created during the year. The rest was our heritage of past savings, and we may well ask ourselves, particularly our workmen shareholders, who are sometimes advised to regard capital as their enemy, how it would have fared with the Company had these past savings not been in existence. Instead of producing, as we have done, commodities to the value of nearly 1000 millions sterling, it is questionable if the whole thirty-five

millions of us could have turned out one-quarter as much. Every year we live we become more indebted to the past; and at this moment we are clearly indebted for one-half of our annual income to those who have worked and toiled before us. In allocating the net balance of our industrial income—say 598 millions sterling—there has first of all to be ascertained the share assignable to labour. A well-known statist, who has made this a subject of special investigation, estimates the wage class at $12\frac{1}{4}$ million persons, and its gross earnings at 521 millions sterling per annum. He includes, however, nearly 3 millions of persons not employed industrially—for example, soldiers, sailors, police, and domestic servants. His calculation of earnings must also be subjected to a considerable deduction for broken time, and the floating population of unemployed. These qualifications reduce the number of industrial workmen to about $9\frac{1}{2}$ million persons, and their earnings to somewhere about 420 millions sterling. After their share of taxes has been written off, our $9\frac{1}{2}$ millions of workmen shareholders pocket about 400 millions sterling a-year as their quota.

“Less than 200 millions of the original 1108 millions is now left for the management and maintenance of our vast industrial organisation, and for the profits of the men who bear all the risks attending it. This seems a large sum, until we begin to consider the work that it has to do. In the Company there are over a million and a half of farmers, who stand up year after year to bear the brunt of poor crops and ruinous prices. Their incomes are arbitrarily assessed by the Inland Revenue Commissioners at 65 millions a-year, which is probably about double the real amount. But

granting the 65 millions, when interest on capital has been deducted from it, say 30 millions, the net income of the farming class shrinks into 35 millions, or about £20 per head for each of the million and a half of persons dependent on this most precarious of all industries. The trader's share of the surplus we can arrive at by deducting from his gross profits, first, his losses through bad debts; second, his share of taxation; third, the interest on his capital. The result is a balance of 75 millions sterling, out of which our trading establishments have to be kept up and the families of the traders maintained. Last of all comes the manufacturer's surplus, amounting, after the aforesaid deductions, to less than 90 millions sterling. You have been asked, gentlemen, to consider the magnitude of our industrial operations. Looking now at the subject from another and equally important point of view, I would like you to realise the smallness of the pivots on which these gigantic operations turn. Our huge income of 1400 millions sterling a-year is a pyramid resting on three points—the farmer's surplus, the manufacturer's surplus, the merchant's surplus. All three of them together do not quite reach 200 millions sterling, but they have to carry nearly five times their own weight in the shape of wages, interest on capital, and taxation. The joint key-stone of the arch on which our prosperity is built is the farmer and the manufacturer, whose combined surplus very slightly exceeds 120 millions a-year. The margin which separates our huge manufacturing establishments and our million and a half of farmers from bankruptcy—the thin line which has to bear all the strain of falling markets and accumulating losses—is actually less by some millions sterling than the

amount levied annually in taxes. These serious considerations, gentlemen, will receive, I hope, your most careful and enlightened attention. They are a few examples of the many grave and embarrassing questions which your directors have had to deal with during the past year. I need not add that we sympathise deeply with the disappointment of the shareholders at receiving such a report. If our explanations should not be deemed satisfactory, no personal feeling on our part will be allowed to stand in the way of further inquiry. If you should decide to appoint a committee of investigation from your own number, it will be met by the Board in a cordial spirit, and every assistance given to it in its work. Gentlemen, I now move that the report and accounts for the past year be adopted."

The motion having been formally seconded—

Mr Josiah Tradefayre, M.P., said they were greatly indebted to their respected chairman for the very full explanation he had given them of the state of affairs, as well as for the amicable spirit with which he had anticipated criticism. It was not to be concealed or disputed that a large amount of dissatisfaction existed among the shareholders. He would frankly confess that he had some sympathy with that feeling. For some time back he had been growing more and more doubtful as to the system on which the Company was administered. They all very willingly acknowledged the ability and zeal of their directors. They had no wish to make personal reflections, or to find fault with the Board, individually or collectively. But it did seem to him, and to those whom he had consulted on the subject, that their methods of conducting business were no longer adapted to the time. It did

not by any means follow that a system of forty years ago was always to be best for them. Free trade had been the best possible policy under the conditions to which it was originally applied. While these conditions lasted, the Company had prospered beyond all historical precedent. They no longer existed, however, and in their place entirely different conditions had to be dealt with. Forty, or even twenty years ago, we had all the markets of the world at our feet. From every quarter of the globe people had to come to us for their railways, their machinery, their cotton and woollen goods, and a hundred other commodities which we could make for them much cheaper than they could do at home. The United States, our own colonies, and the republics of South America, all clamoured for our goods, and absorbed them as fast as we could produce them. We were welcomed in every market on fair terms; and there was hardly such a thing known as a prohibitory tariff. So triumphant was the march of free trade that its too sanguine leaders very excusably fell into the error of supposing that it had won a complete and final victory. Mr Cobden died in the belief that the days of custom-houses were numbered, and that the time was not far distant when his doctrines would rule the world. But international trade to-day is in a very different state to what he anticipated. Countries which, ten or fifteen years ago, were glad to buy our manufactures from us at our own price, are now manufacturing for themselves. Not only have they closed their markets against us, but they have turned the stream back on its fountain-head, and are competing with us at our own door. Every year, almost every month, another of our

foreign markets fences itself off with a protective tariff. Such facts have got to be considered, even if they seem to clash with some accepted doctrine or preconceived theory. See on the paper before you the amounts of capital which have been sunk in our principal industries. The figures are almost appalling in their magnitude. Our farmers and miners have at stake on their business 800 millions sterling, our traders have 700 millions, and our manufacturers about 1200 millions. What do you suppose, gentlemen, is to happen to these thousands of millions of locked-up capital if the present ruinous state of things should continue, to say nothing of the risk of its getting worse? Have you made up your minds to allow factories to be closed, mines to be abandoned, and farms to be thrown out of cultivation, rather than unscrew a single joint of a cast-iron theory? Are you to sacrifice probably millions of your invested capital, as you certainly will if production has to be violently curtailed, rather than let consumers pay a shade more for a few manufactured articles, on which probably no single person spends more than two or three pounds in the course of the year? Free-traders, we know, can give a very invidious aspect to any suggestion affecting consumers. Long practice has made them expert in what, after all, is not a very difficult or a very creditable art. But there is a fatal flaw in their reasoning when applied to a case like the present. It is necessary to their argument to draw a broad line between producers and consumers, but the distinction is mainly theoretical; it has very little existence in fact. In a Company like ours there are very few members who are exclusively consumers, and none at all who are exclusively

producers. Every one of us is a consumer, and a large majority of us are both producers and consumers. If in the character of consumers we deliberately and of our own choice resolve to make a small sacrifice in order to avert a much greater evil that threatens us in our character of producers, where, I would ask, is the injustice of such a proposal? The question is whether we are to hazard a serious loss of industrial capital by continuing in our present course, or to assure the safety of our capital by adding a little to our daily expenditure? If we did raise the cost of cotton goods, say a farthing per yard, it would still be 30, if not 40, per cent below the price of the same goods ten or fifteen years ago. I am no advocate, gentlemen, of high duties or of coddled industries, but I frankly confess that I cannot see the wisdom of being so squeamish about taxing foreign goods, while mountains of taxation are being heaped upon the home manufacturer. (Great applause.)

Mr Samuel Shoddy here stepped forward from the select circle in the corner, and drew from his pocket one of the buff-coloured pamphlets. In a patronising tone he cautioned his brother shareholders against discussion at large, and advised them to confine themselves to the question, "What are the causes of the recent and existing depression in certain branches of our trade?" Various answers had been given to that inquiry, but it appeared to him that the most simple, the most obvious, and by far the most conclusive, had not yet been put forward. During the past year there had been a vast and sudden falling off in our trade, both in imports and exports. The average of the preceding four years had been 710 millions sterling per

annum, while last year's aggregate was only 685 millions, a sudden drop of 25 millions. How was that to be explained? Very simply. The great diminution in 1884 of our imports, and consequently of our exports, was the natural and necessary result of the improved and fairly good harvest with which this country was favoured in that year. This, he submitted, was susceptible of easy and conclusive proof. The amount of our cereal importations last year was $47\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, being $15\frac{3}{4}$ millions less than the average amount of the four preceding years. As nearly as possible three-fourths of the entire falling off in our imports was accounted for by the single article of cereals. Nothing could be easier than to trace the effects of this sudden diminution of our imports—(1) on the amount of our exports; (2) on the special industries which are connected with, and dependent upon, our foreign trade; and (3) on the general prosperity of the country. As to the first point, it would be superfluous to do more than state a fact now universally established, that the imports of a country from the world at large are paid for by the export of goods to the same amount. On that principle it was clear that a diminution of imports must occasion a corresponding decline in exports. Last year it had actually done so to the extent of $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, as compared with the average of the preceding four years. In the first six months of the current year the contraction of our exports had continued to the amount of another 16 millions, proving again the well-known law of trade, that it is imports which govern exports. We can, at will, buy from the world at large to the extent of our wants or desires, for there are always sellers. But we can only with

certainly export to the extent of our purchases, for buyers are not always in the humour. Next, as to the special industries affected by this diminution of our foreign trade, our shipowners have, of course, suffered severely through having a number of their vessels laid up, and again from greatly reduced rates of freight. In sympathy with the shipowners, shipbuilders have suffered through diminished construction of vessels, the iron trade through a diminished consumption of iron, and the coal trade through a diminished demand for coals. Moreover, at our chief ports there has necessarily been some distress, in consequence of say 3000 fewer cargoes being to load and unload. If they looked round them, they would see facts in precise correspondence with these conclusions. The loudest complaints proceeded from the shipowning interest, the shipbuilders and their artisans, the iron and coal industries, the dock labourers, and a few other classes more or less dependent upon foreign trade. From the great manufacturing districts there came but few complaints. The agricultural classes were better off than usual. The retail traders throughout the country were in a flourishing state; the miscellaneous labour-sellers, with the few exceptions he had referred to, were well employed and well paid; and the general prosperity of the country was unimpaired. When they raised their minds from a narrow to a broad view of the question, they would see that the partial evil which the improved harvest caused by diminishing foreign trade, was more than counter-balanced by another and far happier effect of the same cause—an active and prosperous home trade. The $15\frac{3}{4}$ millions sterling worth of cereals which they had raised at home instead of importing from

abroad, had gone to improve the condition and increase the purchasing power of the agricultural classes. In consequence, the manufacturing classes had obtained a home market for their wares to at least the same extent as if those wares had been sent abroad to pay the farmer for his grain. It astounded him that people knowing even the elements of political economy should be led away by such shallow fallacies as were being used to prove that times were unprecedentedly bad, and that everything was going to the dogs. There might be some small sections of shareholders not so well off as they used to be, but the great mass of their members had, he maintained, never been so prosperous or so comfortable. He for one would strenuously oppose the idea of a Committee of Investigation. (Cheers from the Cobden corner.)

Mr Jeremy Stilton hoped the last speaker would pardon him for saying that he had listened to his speech with very considerable astonishment, not unmingled with amusement. Years ago he began to suspect that the Cobden Club had taken to living in the clouds, but he never realised how completely it was up in a balloon until he listened to the words of wisdom that had fallen from Mr Shoddy. He had favoured them with a very plausible medley of figures and abstract principles, intended to prove, apparently, that farmers were only grumbling as usual without anything to grumble about. Those of us here who have the misfortune to be farmers will need a lot of figuring to reason us out of our bad balance-sheets, our arrears of rent, and our overdrafts at the bank. These are figures that we can understand much easier than Mr Shoddy's exports and imports. What, after all, does it matter to

us that a few million bushels less grain have been imported, and so many million bushels more raised at home, so long as our return for the larger quantity is less than for the smaller quantity? If, instead of juggling with statistics, which may be made to mean anything or nothing, Mr Shoddy would come and examine our profit and loss accounts,—he might have a better idea of what depression really means to us. When he spoke of the agricultural classes being better off than usual, he must surely have forgotten, if he ever knew, that there are such things as prices, cost of production, taxes, bad markets, and a dozen other risks which affect us quite as much as a good or a bad crop. Like most of his friends, he seems to suppose that in farming or manufacturing quantity is everything, and that all the rest of the business is done by algebraic signs. But farmers know from painful experience that quantity nowadays is only one of many considerations. Cost of production varies from year to year, taxes steadily increase, the soil requires more liberal expenditure, and markets are more precarious. What we have to consider is the net outcome at the end of the year of all these fluctuating elements. That may be bad with a good crop, or it may be fairly good with a bad crop. We are not so simple as to expect our fellow-shareholders to guarantee us against losses, but it is both for their interest and ours that they should know the real truth as to our position. These superior persons over at Cobden Corner will see nothing which they do not wish to see, and their explanations are too often made to suit the moment. A few years ago, when harvests were bad, they told us to wait for good harvests, and prosperity would once more smile on us.

Now that we have had one fair harvest, they wheel round and prove to us that it has made the depression worse by curtailing our foreign trade! If this season's crop should again be a little better than last year's, there will, I presume, be a further contraction of foreign trade in consequence, and more depression! At that rate, if we were to grow all our own cereals, we should have no foreign trade. The axiom that imports govern exports, which Mr Shoddy used as a master-key to the whole science of foreign trade, is no axiom at all, for the converse of it is equally true. Of course, imports govern exports on the very simple ground that whatever a man buys he has got to pay for in some shape. But if Mr Shoddy means that exports do not also govern imports, he is denying one of the most ordinary experiences of daily life. Every producing country is under a certain degree of compulsion to export its surplus produce at the earliest possible moment. It has to sell without waiting to consider what it will buy in exchange. This master-key of Mr Shoddy is therefore of very little use except to unlock an open door. With all deference to him and to his friends, any reasonable proposal that may be made for reconsidering the general policy of the Company I shall cordially support. (Loud cheers.)

Mr Muletivist, Blackburn, as a Lancashire man, was very proud of Richard Cobden and John Bright. He had always believed in them in the good times, and he would be very sorry to lose faith in them now that times were a bit bad. But it had begun to strike him as very queer that Mr Bright, who must know so much more about trade than anybody else, being, as he is, an old man, and having lived through such a deal, should keep so quiet about the

very bad state of things they were having just now in his part of the country. Though it seemed a sin to say it, masters were almost glad when men went on strike, for it lightened a bit the heavy load they had to carry. You may believe it or not, gentlemen, but there are 40,000 cotton looms standing, and fifteen or twenty thousand men idle at this moment. Over all Lancashire, one in six spindles and one in four looms are idle. Most of those at work are kept going at a positive loss. Nineteen of the joint-stock mills in Oldham have reported losses on the past quarter, and hardly one of them a gain. Mr Bright does not like to hear things of that sort, and very natural too. When they were young fellows hooraying for the Anti-Corn Law, none of them ever expected a turn-up like this. No doubt it worried the old man to see it, and they were sorry for him. Still, for auld lang syne, he might give them a civil answer when they asked him for advice. They were not all Tories even yet, and did not like to be treated as Tories, or fools either, when they asked reasonable questions. He, for one, would be very sorry to go back on free trade, but there was one thing he would like to see, and that was a little more attention paid in Parliament to the trade of the country. (Cheers.) Manufacturing votes might be all right and proper, but in his opinion there were other manufactures of more importance that got much less attention. Lancashire had been suffering from bad trade for ten years, and in all that time only one Minister had ever shown her a bit of sympathy, and that was Lord Salisbury, when he reduced the import duties on cotton in India. (Applause.) His vote would be for inquiry, and the more thorough the better.

Mr Taymouth would sympathise

with his friend Mr Muletwist, if nobody else did. He himself had an equally doleful story to tell. The industry he was connected with was not merely depressed—it was in a galloping consumption, and there would very soon be little of it left to investigate. He spoke for the jute manufacturers of Dundee, who, for three years back, had been feeling their foreign trade gradually slip away from them. In three of their Continental markets—Austria, Germany, and Russia—they had gone back about £600,000 a-year since 1881. The Germans and Russians were now making their own jute goods, and had shut out ours by prohibitive duties of from 20 to 128 per cent. Very soon they might be shipping their manufactures to London, or selling them in our colonies as Dundee goods. Of course our fine notions of commercial justice required us to give them every facility for cutting out our own goods, both at home and abroad! And they were making the most of their opportunities—the Germans especially. The export trade from Dundee had been for years carried on through German agents, with extensive connections on the Continent. They could do as they pleased with it, and now they were rapidly turning it over to their countrymen. In a few years three-fourths of the jute trade of the world would be in German hands.

Mr Satinwove could also a tale unfold as to German competition. He was a maker of writing-papers,—once, he was happy to say, a very good-paying business. It had been going steadily down, however, since Mr Gladstone let in the foreigner on them. Formerly they had pleasure in making improvements, and introducing new designs, because they could count on their enterprise receiving a fair reward. Now it was sickening to them to see

novelty after novelty pirated by foreign makers as soon as it came out, and sold in the most rubbishy materials, at prices they could not live on. The German and French pirates actually imitated their water-marks, and their ornamental covers; and the fraudulent stuff went all over the world, doing harm not only to their trade, but to their good name. At one time he had manufactured largely a fancy paper, which he sold in eight-penny packets. A German imitation of it came into the market, and ran down his price to five-pence, when he gave up making it. Continental makers had of late been getting a large share of the Government stationery contracts; and the system on which these were given out would be a very interesting subject of inquiry. If a Committee were appointed, he might have some curious facts to lay before it.

Captain Halyard was very much surprised that no one had yet spoken for the shipping trade. It could furnish one or two examples of our partiality for other people's interests. In bringing over a cargo from Hamburg or Antwerp, he had to pay on an average £100 for port dues. That came out of the ship's earnings, and just now it made a big hole in them. Very often every ounce of cargo he carried was landed duty free; and the foreign shipper had the use of all this Company's harbours and light-houses gratis, to say nothing of a free market for his goods when put ashore. On going back to Hamburg or Antwerp with British goods, the ship had more port dues to pay—say £120 to £150—all coming again out of her earnings. But neither Hamburg nor Antwerp was fool enough to let the British goods be landed free. They had to pay their full share of taxes before they could go into competition with German or

Belgian goods. That sort of free trade could not be considered as plain as a marling-spike, could it? ("No," and laughter.)

Mr Henry Newman, speaking from a large experience in "financing" industrial enterprises, declared that his business was virtually dead, and had little chance of coming to life again while the Company pursued its present policy. Suppose, he said, a new invention was offered him which required a large establishment to work it, and would give employment to hundreds of work-people. The first thing he would have to consider was how to get markets for the invention. In present circumstances that could be best done by setting up his factory in a protected country like Germany or France or the United States. He would then have the run of that country to start with, and at the same time he would have all free-trade countries open to him. On the other hand, if he started his factory in a free-trade country, he might be virtually confined to it, for the protected countries would be closed against him. Any person wishing to embark capital in an iron or a textile industry would take it abroad rather than invest it at home, for the plain reason that he would thereby get two or more markets in place of one. The rapid increase of new establishments on the Continent, and still more in the States, as compared with their own, was a very obvious proof of his argument.

Mr Jones as an exporter, who knew something of the fierce competition they had now to face in all parts of the world, agreed that their most formidable rival in the future was to be Germany. To his mind there was something alarming in the rapidity with which the Germans were making up on them. They seemed to possess the secret of doing what, on Cobdenite prin-

ciples, was impossible—always selling more to other people and buying less from them. In the past twelve years they had raised their exports from about 124 millions sterling to 167 millions sterling per annum, while in the same period their imports had declined from 173 millions to 164 millions sterling. Mr Shoddy would find some scope for his ingenuity in making that square with his axiom that "imports govern exports." Another striking thing it proved was the rapidity with which a good customer might be transformed into a sharp competitor. In 1873 Germany imported one-and-ninepence worth of goods for every shilling's worth that she exported; in 1883 her exports and her imports were as nearly as possible on a level. With us it is unfortunately the reverse. We import every year more foreign manufactures and export a smaller value of home manufactures. The one branch of our trade that makes steady progress is the importation of foreign goods.

Mr Goldschen was afraid some of them had yet to learn that this was a very large and complex question. Let them first settle what they really had to find out, and then consider how they should proceed in order to find it. What, in fact, was the evil which they spoke of as depression of trade? What was the complaint they had to consider, and where did it come from? It was not a complaint as to the volume of their trade. No one disputed that it was large, and till lately it had been steadily growing. Neither was it a complaint that either their industry or their commerce was becoming less efficient, because notoriously they had never been better organised or more ably conducted. Nor was it a complaint that their labour was degenerating: taking it all round, better skilled labour had perhaps never existed.

Least of all was it a complaint that the means and the materials of our industry were more difficult to obtain. Raw produce of every kind had never been so cheap, and capital had seldom been so superabundant. Then, gentlemen, if it be none of these things, what else could it be? It could only be one thing else—namely, the want of profitable markets. Put it so to a hundred different manufacturers engaged in a hundred different trades, and they will all answer, "That is precisely it. What we are suffering from is the want of profitable markets. We produce now double or treble what we used to do, and have less profit for our pains." He had on another occasion gone rather minutely into this aspect of the case, and he had been able to show from the income-tax returns that, while a gratifying increase took place among smaller incomes, there was little or none at all among those of the higher grades. During six recent years that he had examined, the class of incomes between £150 and £200 had increased by 20 per cent; those between £200 and £300, by 16 per cent; and those between £300 and £400, by 13 per cent; but those between £400 and £1000 had increased by only 2½ per cent. The latter, which might be considered, in a special degree, employers' incomes, had in these six years been practically stationary. At the beginning of the six years we were manufacturing cotton at the rate of 59,000 bales per week, and at the end of it at the rate of 70,000 bales per week; but we were earning no more profit, if as much, on the larger quantity than on the smaller. That seemed to him to be, in a nutshell, the secret of trade depression. It extended more or less through all industries and through all trades; not only so, but it was felt all over the

world. The universal cry was, "No profits." But this gloomy picture was not without a brighter side. Over-production, though a great evil for the producer, was a great benefit to the consumer. It might be doubted if the consumer was enjoying all the advantage of the fall in prices. A considerable share of it had perhaps been intercepted by the distributors. The retail trade of the Company had undoubtedly flourished greatly, and was flourishing still. At all events it ought to be, for otherwise where could those profits go between the reduced cost of the raw material and the price paid by the consumer? They must go somewhere, and they might congratulate themselves that the retail trade was in a satisfactory condition. The working classes must also be well off, for their wages were still comparatively high, and they had a greater command than ever of the necessaries of life. The situation had thus some redeeming features; but he would not deny that in other respects, and especially from the producer's point of view, it was very serious and disquieting. He could not, however, associate himself with any official scheme of inquiry, as it might be perverted for political objects. Those who raised and fostered this alarm about depressed trade had ends of their own to serve to which he could be no party. It was quite possible they might have to modify their policy, but if they did they should be very careful to whom they entrusted the direction of the change. Let them beware of Toryism under specious names; and they would also need to keep a sharp eye on Germany. She was making up on them rapidly, and had shut them out of her own markets by protective tariffs; but her protection rendered it more difficult for her to compete in

more distant markets with their free-trade industry. He begged his fellow-shareholders not to be disheartened by the increasing difficulties of the situation, but to keep on thinking them over and turning them about in their minds. That agreeable occupation would of itself greatly mitigate their sufferings. (Ohs and ironical cheers.)

The Chairman thought it was evidently the wish of the meeting that the discussion should now close. Where opinions were so divided, it was very difficult for the Board to choose a course which would be just to all conflicting wishes and interests. He had consulted his fellow-directors on the subject, and it had been suggested, as a fair compromise, that the Board should relieve the shareholders from a dilemma by undertaking to appoint on their own responsibility a Commission of Inquiry, to be selected partly from the Board and partly from the principal industries to be investigated. Their respected colleague Lord Idlesleigh had kindly agreed to form the Commission and to preside over it. (Loud applause.) He had felt sure that this would be a satisfactory proposal, and it gave him great pleasure to observe how they had received it. He was sorry it had not met with the approval of their friend Mr Goldschen. With all deference to him, it seemed a very tame conclusion to such a clear and convincing exposition as he had given of the bad state of trade, to advise them to fold their hands and resign themselves to Brahminical contemplation. That was not what rival companies were doing. The crisis called for action, and at the risk of again differing from their respected friend, he would say united action. (Cheers.) At such a juncture all petty jealousies and sectarian feeling should be

laid aside. One and all of them, small and great, master and workman, politician or no politician, should join hands together, and fight out the battle manfully, as their fathers had often done in like circumstances. (Great cheering.) The whole subject of their relations to other companies demanded reconsideration. Mr Goldschen said very truly, that the root of their troubles was the want of profitable markets, and could they wonder at it, when they had for forty years been busy opening their doors, while other companies had been busy shutting theirs? They could not force their neighbours to buy from them, but they might at least take care that those who did not buy should not have the free use of the Great Britain's docks, and wharves, and warehouses for selling in. (Loud applause.) Where there was no reciprocity, let there be strict justice. Their shareholders should no longer be exclusively taxed to maintain great shipping ports for foreigners to undersell their own producers in. Without offering any obstruction to trade beyond what now exists, it would surely be possible to levy on foreign imports their just share of the expense to which they put the Company. (Cheers.) That, in a word, gentlemen, is what we have got to come to. (Applause.) Many of us may not like it, and may fight against it for a year or two longer. In the words of a distinguished man who has himself been the cause of some unexpected changes, the best cure for people who will not be reasoned out of their prejudices is to "stew in their own gravy." Our friends in the corner there will perhaps take that hint. (Laughter.)

The meeting closed with a cordial vote of thanks to the Chairman.

THE GREAT BRITAIN INDUSTRIAL COMPANY.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT OF A NORMAL YEAR.

To Value of raw materials					
Imported, less re-exported	£151,000,000				
		By Products of agriculture	£230,000,000		
		" " mining	61,000,000		
		" " fishing	11,000,000		
				£372,000,000	
		By Manufactures of food	£34,000,000		
		" " clothing	80,000,000		
		" " housing	70,000,000		
				190,000,000	
		By Manufactures of metals	£95,000,000		
		" " cotton	100,000,000		
		" " wool	40,000,000		
		" " linen	18,000,000		
		" " silk	7,000,000		
		" " leather	9,700,000		
		" " paper	7,000,000		
		" " printing	18,000,000		
		" " chemicals	3,300,000		
		" " stoneware	10,000,000		
		" " wood	30,000,000		
		" " sundries	82,000,000		
				415,000,000	
To Working expenses of railways and canals	26,000,000	By Railway and canal freights			
" Working expenses of mercantile marine	70,000,000	" Shipping freights			
" Loss through insolvencies	25,000,000	" Profits on foreign trade	£62,000,000		
" Loss through bad investments	20,000,000	" " domestic trade	76,000,000		
" Net Income	1,108,000,000			138,000,000	
		By Income from Investments			
		Non-Industrial:—			
		Securities, £2,500,000,000 at 4 per cent	£100,000,000		
		Houses, &c., £1,500,000,000 at 4 per cent	60,000,000		
				160,000,000	
					£1,400,000,000
					£1,400,000,000

NET INCOME ACCOUNT OF A NORMAL YEAR.

By Net Income brought down	£1,108,000,000		
To Interest on Industrial Capital:—			
In Land	£2,000,000,000 at 3 per cent	£60,000,000	
" Farming, Mining, and			
" Fishing	800,000,000 at 5	" 40,000,000	
" Manufacturing	1,200,000,000 at 5	" 60,000,000	
" Trading	700,000,000 at 5	" 35,000,000	
" Railways and Shipping	900,000,000 at 5	" 45,000,000	
		£240,000,000	
To Taxation—			
Imperial		£75,000,000	
Local (Rates, Tolls, Dues, &c.)		48,000,000	
Tithes, &c.		7,000,000	
		130,000,000	
To Share of 9,500,000 Workmen		400,000,000	
" " 1,500,000 Farmers		35,000,000	
" " 800,000 Manufacturers		88,000,000	
" " 500,000 Traders		75,000,000	
" " Investors, Renters, &c.		140,000,000	
		£1,108,000,000	£1,108,000,000

LOSSES OF 1885 COMPARED WITH A NORMAL YEAR.

Workmen, in lower wages, short time, unemployed, &c. (10 per cent)	£40,000,000
Farmers, in lower value of produce (10 per cent)	20,000,000
Manufacturers, in lower profits (5 per cent)	30,000,000
Traders, in lower profits	—
Shipping, railways, &c., in lower profits (5 per cent)	5,250,000
Investors, in lower interest and rents ($\frac{1}{2}$ per cent)	20,000,000
Landowners, in lower rents (1 per cent)	20,000,000
	£135,250,000

ESTABLISHMENTS AND DISESTABLISHMENT.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

IN all the discussion upon the important subject of Disestablishment, which has been so suddenly sprung upon the public, there is one material element in the case which has been almost wholly overlooked. It has been assumed almost universally that the aspirations of the class lately intrusted with the franchise are one with those of the lower class of voters with whom the preponderance of power previously rested; and that the course of legislation henceforth will be in the same direction as that which Liberal legislation has taken for the last fifty years, only with accelerated speed, in proportion to the majority which the newly enfranchised will have at the polls. This assumption involves a fallacy which may produce such disastrous effects if it is acted on with regard to the Church, that it is most important to have it cleared up. It is true that the interests and aims of the newly enfranchised classes will be decisively impressed upon the course of future legislation; but it may well be found that their influence, especially with regard to the institution now in question, will not be revolutionary but conservative. The lower-middle class, whom the Reform of 1832 called into predominant power, has been for generations the stronghold of Dissent; and the political Dissenter, who was the offspring of that legislative epoch, has been wholly of their ranks, or of those who played up to them. The Puritans, whose position in the Church was made untenable in 1662, belonged almost exclusively to that class; and the

numerous bodies who date their existence from the doctrinal and disciplinary differences of the seventeenth century, have maintained their ground, as separate sects, by the sympathy of the class with which for generations they have been identified. And it is not only from tradition. The narrow culture and education of that class have rendered its members peculiarly receptive of Puritan and sectarian theology; and above all, they have had the strong bond of union supplied by the ministrations of preachers of their own class, entering into all their sympathies and sharing all their prejudices.

Class feelings, class culture, and class prejudices have been the very mainstay of Dissent. The Church has represented wider culture, and her ministers have, as a rule, been drawn from the upper and upper-middle classes. The lower-middle class has been the stronghold of political dissent,—the very class which the Reform of 1832 placed in predominant political power, and that of 1885 has effectually supplanted.

Now, there was no direction in which the class interests and feelings of the dominant electorate of 1832-67 made itself more unmistakably felt than against the Church. The leading idea of all the legislation of that period was to take away all privileges supposed to have belonged to the previously dominant upper classes, by sharing them among those on whom political power had then devolved. And no institution has been more persistently attacked since 1832

than the Church ; chiefly from the belief that it had become the appanage of the upper classes, and its ministers belonged to a higher stratum than that from which those of Dissenting congregations were drawn. The crowning effort of this motive force was the Disestablishment of the Irish Church ; which virtually, if not technically, was the last work of the electorate of 1832-67. It was anticipated on all hands that a similar fate was in store for the Church of England, in, at least, a few years or months. But it is a remarkable and significant fact, that the result of the widening of the franchise, even in its partial extension to boroughs in 1867, has been quite opposite to that which was expected.

The Church of England has *not* been disestablished by the partially reformed electorate—and more, no serious attempt has been made in any such direction. While it is generally felt that the cause of Disestablishment has not progressed in the interval, but has perceptibly and unquestionably gone back.

More causes than one may be assigned for this ; but the chief we believe to be that the stronghold of Dissent was the class which 1832 placed in power ; and the class partially put in their place in 1867, and wholly preponderating henceforth, has totally different feelings and aims on the subject. It is significant that latterly the attempts at fancy legislation for the Church, which may be regarded as ingenious balloons sent up to see which way the wind blows, have all gone in the direction of reform rather than that of Disestablishment. And the feeling of the extended electorate may very well prove to be that their interests will be best served, not by the Disestablishment of the Church, but by its reform ; and

thus the opinion which we hazarded will be confirmed, that its tendency will be found not more revolutionary, but more truly conservative than its predecessor's.

For any one who has any acquaintance with the average working man must be aware that many of the motives which chiefly actuate the class immediately above him, especially in such a matter as the Church, are wholly inoperative with him.

Dissent, as such, has little or no hold upon him. To him no Puritan instincts or prejudices have been handed down ; no class interests of sectarian bodies have become honourable traditions. Differences of doctrine are matters of pure indifference to him ; and he is entirely free from the aversion and jealousy with which the Dissenter views what he considers the privileged position given by the status of the Church to the minister of a class above himself. The working man is quite above this feeling ; indeed his desires all point the other way.

No one recognises more clearly and intuitively the possession of that culture and good breeding which make a man a gentleman ; no one values it more, or will more cheerfully and honestly accept the hand of good-fellowship held out by one who is a gentleman indeed, or follow his leading more readily, if he finds that such a one goes straight and means well to him and his. The petty feeling which has been so powerful for the last fifty years, that would disestablish the Church only to lower the social status of the parson, will find no support from him. He knows a gentleman at once, and would much rather follow his leading than that of any one else. There is nothing more easy and friendly than the intercourse

of one who is a gentleman indeed with the working classes. It is your underbred man who gives himself airs and stands on his dignity; and that is what Hodge cannot stand and won't put up with. So far from harbouring any class antipathy against the gentry, he knows that as a rule they are his friends and do well to him, and are often his allies against his natural enemies, the small capitalists and petty employers, who work him hard and grind him down, and make much more of the distance between them. Therefore, if he can be made to feel that the Church exists for his good, no mere class prejudices, such as have been so potent an element in Liberationist forces hitherto, will operate much with him. If the parson is a man of culture and breeding he will gladly have him so, and will prefer to be visited and helped by him, rather than by any other; and he will know that he can count much more certainly upon his sympathy and his aid.

But will he be convinced that the Church and her clergy do exist for his good? And if he is not so convinced now, under what conditions can he be made to feel this? That is the main point, and it is worth our while to see how some of his idiosyncrasies bear upon it.

It is unnecessary perhaps to state that the agricultural labourer or ordinary artisan of real life is as unlike the Hodge with whom we are familiar in the cartoons of 'Punch,' or the novels of writers who hail from the region of Bow Bells, as well can be.

The "household-suffrager," if we may coin the term—the ordinary labourer, artisan, or mill-hand, of whom will be composed the majority henceforth in nearly all our constituencies—is slow of speech,

stolid in manner, and independent in bearing. Cautious he is in expressing his views, for he is keenly alive to ridicule, and fears covert sarcasm from those whose ideas flow more quickly than his own; but for whose opinions, if they are chiefly, as he suspects, the fruit of mere "book-learning," he has inwardly a thinly veiled contempt. Gain his confidence, and penetrate his crust of reticence, you will find him very shrewd, especially in judging character; keen-sighted, within a limited range; very retentive of facts that have come within his own observation, and of impressions that have once made any mark upon him. He has strong class feelings—none more so; but he is free from many prejudices which beset the class just above him, and are the result of the half-education in which the lower-middle class is nurtured. Thus, within a more limited range, his judgment is often clearer than theirs, and he is capable of taking a more impartial impression of new ideas. For it is your half-educated man who thinks he knows everything, and has cross-lights of his own which distort anything presented new to his vision.

Touch him on class feelings and interests, and he is as obstinate and tenacious as any duke. Reason with him, and put things fairly before him, talk in plain straightforward language which he can understand, and does not suspect of flummery,—you will find him shrewd and fair in judgment.

And he is very just, as far as he knows. Prejudices of his own he may have, but he has a strong sense of justice and hatred of oppression or unfairness. He is strict in his ideas of discipline, and summary in judgment on evil-doers. It may be indeed, and often is the case, that the vices

of the rich are more abhorrent to him than those of the poor; for the latter to him are natural, and the fruit of the human infirmity which he recognises in all—while the former, seeming unnatural, strike him as arguing deliberate love of evil for its own sake. He is singularly grateful for kindness, if done quietly and without ostentation, and seldom forgets an injury. His views on all points are intensely practical and realistic, and for all theories and theorists he has a sublime and ineradicable contempt.

From this summary of his character, we may forecast with tolerable accuracy the attitude in which he will view the question of the Church, and the aspirations which he will silently but surely impress upon his representatives in the councils of the State. Many of the questions which have hitherto disturbed the peace of the Church and the State he will brush away with a total disregard to their existence. Minor doctrinal differences, over many of which the £10 householder will work himself into a white heat, and on which your grocer or clerk, fed carefully on the narrowest pabulum of Dissenting tracts, thinks himself qualified to express an opinion as infallible as any pope,—these to the household-suffrager, for the most part, will be matters of absolute indifference. The disputes of High and Low Church, the rival claims of apostolical succession or inward illumination, are to him mere battles of kites and crows. He is to be reached more by the emotions than by arguments; and the High and Dry, or the Low and Slow, fail to touch him at all in the same way as the Ritualist on the one side or the Ranter on the other.

But between these, so far as

their doctrine is concerned, he has no particular preference. The high sacramentarian who devotes his life, like Father Lowder, to work among the poor, can fill his church quite as readily as the ranting preacher at Little Bethel, or even more so. For of the two, if he can be got to go to any place of worship, he prefers a gentleman to speak to him; and he likes a hearty service, all the more if it is bright with plenty of singing, and a decorated church. For the Salvation Army the respectable working man has a deep-rooted distrust and dislike.

But can he be got to any place of worship? That is indeed, seemingly, the great difficulty: but his character will let us know where the difficulty lies, and what is the remedy. The difficulty is not doctrinal. You will find working men in crowds at high ritualistic services; sparsely in the Dissenting chapels; conspicuous by their absence from churches with a low ritual, where the doctrines preached approach most nearly to those of Dissent. Nor is it wholly that he objects to the Church service. It is above him until he is used to it, and does not touch him like a simple sermon, or prayers which he has not to follow by book. But this is hardly to be wondered at when we remember that the services of the Church are the product of many centuries of growth, and reflect the devotional thoughts to which men were educated and trained for generations of Christian culture and experience.

It is a matter of common remark that the descendants of Dissenters in the third generation are found to join the Church, because their trained and educated feelings of devotion are found to assimilate with her services. Ruder generations require simpler food; and if

the working man cares little for the services of the Church, it is simply because he has not been trained to them. Give him simple and stirring addresses, and don't require him to turn over a Prayer-book with which he does not readily become familiarised, and he will listen to the prayers of the Church and the preaching of her ministers with quite as great readiness as to the services of any other body.

But there is one thing which the deep and inveterate *class* feelings to which we have alluded will never let him do,—and that is, to worship in a place which he thinks belongs to his betters, and where he does not feel himself welcome and at home. We do not pay half enough regard to this strong feeling, which is, at the bottom, mainly a sense of self-respect. If the working man goes to a church, and finds the great majority of the seats claimed by better-dressed people, and he is himself cold-shouldered into side-aisles and dark corners, he will never go near it again. The pew system, whereby the best seats are reserved for the squire, and the gentry, and the rich tradesmen; and even the small grocer, whom he feels to be little better than himself, has his own seat allotted, and glares at him in speechless wrath if he ventures to drop humbly into an unoccupied sitting in a corner of it,—this wretched encroachment on the rights of parishioners, which has been handed down to us from Puritan times, has more to do with the absence of the working man from church than anything else. It is not due to any feeling of dissent from the doctrines of the Church or repugnance to her worship. The first is a matter of comparative unimportance to him—the other is a question of habit and education;

and neither presents any insuperable difficulty in the way of his adhesion and support.

But there is another factor of the utmost importance in determining his attitude, which, therefore, we must by no means leave out of sight. That is, the strong feeling with which he regards social questions.

Not that he is, as a rule, what we generally call a socialist. He is shrewd enough to see that a compulsory redistribution of property, when Tom, Dick, and Harry have nothing in their pockets, might be all very well; but it would certainly be followed by another as compulsory redistribution some years later, when Tom, Dick, and Harry, if they were saving and industrious men, might have a good deal to lose. The Utopia of foreign socialists is to him a foolish dream of a few visionary theorists who presumably have views of their own upon his pockets.

But in any practically social question—any reform or regulation or well-meant effort that tends to make the life of the majority better and happier, and to add to the sum of human comfort and enjoyment,—in these he is keenly and intensely interested. The doctrinal differences of sects are to him childish wrangles beside any real and practical effort to ameliorate his life and home, and remedy the glaring inequalities and hardships of modern social existence, which he bears with singular moderation and stoicism, but feels deeply nevertheless.

And here we see a most marked augury for the future, and a clear indication of our own line of conduct. The personal influence of the Church, her clergy and their families, in ameliorating the condition of the working classes, and the

many works of practical beneficence in all parts of the country where the population has not outgrown the sphere of her influence, have been, and will be still more, the great secret of her continued stability. The labours of the clergy in educating the children of the poor, relieving the sick and destitute, and doing practical good in cottage homes, will be ever gratefully remembered, and cannot fail to tell in the hour of trial.

The weakness of the Church in towns arises from the fact of the sudden flow of population into all centres of trade and manufacture having outgrown this personal influence of the Church's ministers, and the sphere of their practical beneficence. Wherever, in the lowest, most godless districts, the clergyman can find his way into a working man's home to do some good or show some sympathy in sickness or distress, there he will find a hearty welcome, and meet with manly respect.

The real secret of the success of ritualistic clergy, such as Father Lowder, to whom we have alluded, has been the unstinted self-devotion with which they have gone about among the working poor, to do them good. The strength of infidel lecturers, or would-be Positive philosophers, who have endeavoured to disseminate their doctrines among our artisans, has been the way in which they have represented religion as dealing wholly with another world, and addressed themselves to the (*soi-disant*) enthusiasm of humanity, and the amelioration of the lot of men in this life. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that the voter of the future is at the disposition of that Church or creed or party which shall prove to him that they mean the best by, and

can do the best for, the social and practical amelioration of human life. And therein lies the solution of many questions of our future national progress.

If, then, we are right in our forecast that the feelings, aims, and instincts of the class which will form the numerical majority in the constituencies henceforth, will make themselves felt in all future legislation, and in the regulation of all our public institutions, we may foretell with some accuracy what will be the effect of our last electoral reform upon the Church. We may expect fewer of the doctrinal dissensions which have rent the Church and crippled her usefulness hitherto. The household-suffrager is much too fair in judgment, and views speculative questions with far too great indifference, to allow such matters to disturb the peace of the Church henceforth, if it is to be a national institution still. As certainly he will not endure that the Church's pay shall be drawn if the Church's work is done negligently, or that drones and incapables shall shelter themselves behind a doctrinal orthodoxy, or a strict conformity to popular prejudice in ritual. He will be summary in judgment upon incompetence and neglect of duty, and require that a fair day's work shall be done for a fair day's wage; and that, if the labourer is to have his hire, he must show that he first earns it. Probably the whole question of the tenure of clerical offices will have to undergo a searching revision. The anomalies of clerical pay, the abuses of patronage, the inequalities of preferments, and the deadlock of discipline in the Church,—all these are anomalies and blemishes which will strike the new voter much more forcibly than the more educated classes, who see them

as things of historical growth; and his innate sense of fairness and summary sense of justice will never tolerate these when he becomes alive to them.

But all this points, not in the direction of Disestablishment, but of Church reform; and it may very probably be found, as we said at the outset, that the influence of the democracy upon the Church will be more truly conservative than that of the class which is now supplanted; and not revolutionary, though it may ensure some sweeping and much-needed reforms.

It is admitted on all hands that the Radical leaders made a huge mistake in showing their hand against the Church too soon; and with the ready sensitiveness to public opinion which characterises them, they have done their best to draw their hand back and cover it up. It was probably a mistake not only of time and opportunity. It was a misreading of the wants and feelings of the working class, which never will disestablish the Church, save by a gross and total misrepresentation of the whole case for its maintenance.

In one respect that which has been a reproach to the Church for the last fifty years will now be a bulwark of strength to her. The social position of the clergy, which has brought their influence to bear upon social questions, and placed them in close relation to all the social interests of the various classes of the English people,—their traditions and instincts, which have led them to mix in all departments of social life, and take a lead in all social movements,—these have been a reproach in the minds and in the mouths of the dominant electorate of 1832-67, whose Puritan traditions and sectarian antipathies have led them to denounce the clergy as worldly

and secular compared with their own accepted type of the ministerial character.

With the new electorate that very social *status*, the social traditions, and interest in all social questions which distinguish the clergy of the Church of England, will be their very highest recommendation. A clergy that will mix freely among the people to do them good, will interest themselves in all measures of practical and social utility, will be active in the cause of education and the relief of the sick and needy, and bring a practical Christianity to bear upon the problems and necessities of modern life,—this is the clergy that the coming democracy will have, if it has any. But this is the very type to which the clergy of the National Church approach more nearly than any other. And the work is such as, by all the traditions of their order, their national position, and the unrivalled facilities of intercourse among all classes and conditions of men which they enjoy, our clergy are fitted to discharge in a way in which none other are.

The old-fashioned country parish priest, who was a scholar and a gentleman, could meet on equal terms the magnates of the county, yet moved freely and unostentatiously in the little world of Hodge's daily life; dispensed justice tempered with mercy at the petty sessions, and took the chair at the Board of Guardians; farmed a little, and perhaps shot or fished a little; looked after his schools, and taught a simple and manly Christianity from the pulpit,—this was a type in which Hodge had thorough confidence, and whom he would never attempt to disturb: for he knew by long experience that he was the very best friend that his class ever had. And

though that type of priest is fast being improved from off the face of English society, yet the traditions which it has left behind are not wholly lost. The sons and grandsons of Hodge, who have drifted into the dark alleys and low purlieus of large towns, still find, when in sickness or poverty or distress the clergy seek them out, that they have no better friends after all. And the black shadow of discontent that settles down over them in the squalid dens where they congregate, in numbers that the Church's extension has not yet overtaken, will break and brighten into respect and grateful support, if it can be shown that a wise and timely redistribution of the Church's revenues and boundaries can be made, to bring clerical energy and influence from the little villages where it is now half wasted on a dwindling population, to bear upon the fast-increasing multitudes of our towns, and neutralise the misery and vice and discontent that are

the real and growing dangers of modern society.

But all this points to Reform, not Disestablishment. That alternative, indeed, may be in store for us, and come with startling rapidity (for events move very quickly in a democracy), unless the anomalies and abuses of the present state of the Church can be remedied, and her great powers and vast revenues turned to the best uses and real requirements of the age, by some measures of prudent and timely reform, on sound Church principles. But if such reforms can be wisely carried out, they may give the Church a hold upon the new electorate that will never be shaken off. And through all fluctuations and vicissitudes of State that may be in store for us, and amid all oscillations of the balance of constitutional power, the Church may be preserved as the Church of the Christian English nation, whatever form of secular government may be shaped by the coming democracy.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

What we have said regarding the Church of England applies with equal force to the Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland. There, too, we have a popular Church enjoying the confidence and support of the majority of the population; a Church that has been ever ready to accommodate itself to the spirit and feelings of the times; a working Church, that, by the admission of even its opponents, has always exercised a beneficial influence upon the national life,—threatened with Disestablishment and Disendowment. The attack upon both Churches springs from the same source; the defence of both rests upon the same broad

and intelligible grounds; and the fall of the one must necessarily determine the existence of the other. As at present the Church of Scotland is the immediate object of attack—an outwork which must be carried before the enemy throw themselves against the main citadel—it is necessary to say a few words regarding the attitude which the Liberationists in Scotland have taken up towards the Kirk, the arguments which they are putting forward, and the tactics which they are employing to force their cause upon the country as a legitimate political issue.

Those who have studied the history of Scottish Presbyterianism

in its struggles for State recognition must marvel how the principles of Voluntaryism and of the liberation of religion from State control could ever have taken root among any of its sections. If there was one sentiment of civil polity to which the founders and fathers of the Scottish Kirk clung more than another, it was the union of Church and State. Simple toleration for their creed—even were it accompanied with the fullest political and ecclesiastical freedom—was not enough for them; they required Presbyterianism to be maintained as *the* religion of the State. To them the idea of a minister being dependent upon the voluntary offerings of his flock would have been inconceivably repugnant, as compelling him to “make traffic of the Word,” to frame his admonitions not according to the necessities of his hearers, but to flatter their likings. From the days of Knox down to the Disruption, it was held to be essential for the utility of a minister that he should not be dependent upon the caprice or prejudice of his congregation, but should hold a position which would entitle him to exercise an authoritative ministry without incurring the risk of injuring his livelihood by either frankness of speech or firmness of discipline. This privilege, prevented as it was, by the balance which the Presbyterian system of Church government maintains, from assuming the form of priestly tyranny, secured for the ministers of the Kirk a respect and attachment by means of which the Establishment laid a firm hold upon the affections of the people. The shrewd character of the Scotch people is readily able to discriminate between the ministrations of the independent priest and of the hired Levite; and it is not less in keeping with the fru-

gality of his character that he should prefer to have a Church supported for him, so long as its doctrines are in general accordance with his views, to upholding one at its own direct cost.

In all the secessions from the Church of Scotland, resulting in the formation of the bodies that are now attacking its position, neither the Voluntary sentiment nor a desire for separation from the State had any place. On the contrary, the seceding bodies have all accepted Voluntary support as the only alternative to their extinction; and in the case of the Free Church, so far from seeking to separate from the State, it was only when, after a very protracted struggle, it failed to bend the State to its own views, that the Free Church party reluctantly withdrew from the connection. When the protestations, the prayers, and even the tears which the idea of separating from the Church of their country wrung from Chalmers, Candlish, Gordon, and other leaders of the Disruption movement, are remembered, we can realise the deterioration that Dissenting Presbyterianism has undergone, when we now find Messrs Rainy, Hutton, and Cairns—we are ashamed to have to put such names in so close proximity with those of their illustrious predecessors—calmly proposing to have the same Church kicked aside like an old shoe. Let us see how it has come to pass that the Scottish Dissenters have taken up an attitude alien to their original principles, and unworthy of themselves as Christian denominations.

The late Dean of Westminster, speaking of the National Church of Scotland and its Presbyterian Dissenters, once declared that, “Theirs is a uniformity which Rome might have enjoined, and which Lambeth might envy.”

Teaching the same doctrine as the Established Church, and following the same order of Church government, the Presbyterian Dissenters might have taken a just pride in regarding their Churches as a voluntary and valuable supplement to the work of the Establishment, and have looked forward with Christian hope to a time when, petty differences in polity having been forgotten, they might once more unite on a common basis of creed and nationality. Union rather than schism ought to be the aim of every Christian denomination; and it is doubtful whether the gain to the world from the division of creeds has not been more than neutralised by the rancour and rivalry which denominational emulation has infused into Christianity. The assurance that separation from the State will remove the only barrier to a general union of all the Presbyterian bodies is the only suasive argument that the advocates of Disestablishment have to offer, and it is one that, according to their own showing, does not deserve consideration. For a number of years the Free Church and the United Presbyterian body quarrelled over a common basis of agreement, presenting the truly Irish spectacle of two Christian Churches

"Fighting like devils for conciliation,
And hating each other for the love of
God."

The result, when all had been done that could be done, was, that the breach between the two remained somewhat wider than before. The idea that the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland will do ought to contribute to Presbyterian unity, cannot for a moment be entertained by any one who knows the temper of those who sway the

views of the Dissenting denominations.

It is of importance at this time that we should explain how principles so alien to Presbyterian feeling as those of the Liberation Society came to be adopted by the Scottish Dissenters, and on what grounds they have been put so prominently forward at the present elections. For many years the agitation carried on by the Liberation Society met with no response from Scottish Dissenters. The only denomination which took any interest in its efforts was the Independents or Congregationalists, and such support as they awarded to it was given rather out of sympathy for their brethren in England than because the Church of Scotland as a State institution was felt by them to be a grievance. The Presbyterian Dissenters distrusted the Liberation movement. The Free Church had started in 1843 as opposed on principle to the Voluntary system. The United Presbyterians felt very doubtful about the character of the agitation. The U.P. Church, however, has always been most keenly political of all Scottish denominations, and has generally identified itself more or less with Radical aims. The United Presbyterians were brought into closer rivalry with the Congregationalists than any other of the Scottish denominations; a display of zeal and activity became necessary, and a somewhat limping religion had to be propped up on political crutches. United Presbyterianism was not flourishing on the Voluntary system; and that to its leaders was a good enough reason why all competing sects should be reduced to the same uncertain means of subsistence. Once the Radical candidate had discovered that a denunciation of

the union of Church and State elicited a response from Scottish Dissenters, the topic naturally became a prominent part of his stock-in-trade; and he lashed the grievance all the more freely that he knew there was no chance of his being called upon to give practical effect to his separatist proposals. It thus came to be understood, that in a few of the Scottish constituencies where Dissent was prevalent, it might help a Radical or Liberal candidate to play the rôle of Liberationist; and as the part was not likely to hurt any one, and might help himself, a good deal of boisterous language about the Church was spoken and applauded; the only actual gain, however, being to the English Liberationists, who could draw from such speeches the picture of Scotland groaning under the incubus of an Established Church, as a means of giving a fillip to their subscribing supporters. We are speaking now of the days immediately succeeding the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, when Presbyterian Dissenters began to cherish a faint hope that Mr Gladstone might not improbably play for them the same game as he had played for the Romish priesthood in Ireland. The Free Church, to its honour, still held aloof, and stood fast by the disinterested policy of its founders. Under wiser and abler leaders it would have continued to maintain the same attitude. But the Free Church soon found that the Establishment was touching it in its most vulnerable part. The abolition of Patronage, a reform wrought out by the Established Church itself, abolished also the reason for the existence of the Free Church as a separate body. That this was really the case has been made manifest not more by the restless

spirit which the Free Church has since exhibited, than by the visible decline of its resources and energy. Under a leader like Chalmers, the Free Church would have joyfully embraced the opportunity of forming once more a strong and united national Establishment. Guided by Dr Rainy, it naturally enough was driven to the opposite extreme. Union with the United Presbyterians became an imperative necessity, if Presbyterian Dissent was to be saved from being swept away by the growing popularity of the Established Church. But union was not practicable: the only agreement they could arrive at was an agreement to go on differing; and each body went its own way, with probably only one feeling in common—a misgiving that the new hold which the Church of Scotland was taking, in consequence of the abolition of Patronage, was likely to have a disastrous influence upon their own fortunes.

Another reform on the part of the Established Church accentuated the active jealousy which the abolition of Patronage had aroused among Dissenters. Dissenting ministers, who were able to satisfy the Church regarding their education and ministerial status, were accepted as clergy, and the restrictions were removed which had prevented divinity students of other denominations from entering the ministry of the Church except at the sacrifice of the training they had already undergone. This relaxation was so largely taken advantage of, both by ministers and students, that the Voluntary system suffered no small discredit. Clergymen who had worked with success in the Dissenting Churches applied in considerable numbers to be admitted to the Established Church, through disgust at the

treatment they had undergone under the Voluntary system. This was a source of mortification both to Free Churchmen and United Presbyterians; and though they could not agree upon a union in the bonds of Christian amity, they managed to combine against a Church of whose progress and increasing prosperity they stood in common dread.

It was not without a severe internal struggle that the Free Church surrendered itself to Liberationist principles under the leadership of Dr Rainy, who is the principal of its Edinburgh Divinity Hall. A large and influential body of its ministers and laymen stoutly opposed, and still oppose, the political attitude which the majority were led to take up. The Highlands, which in Disruption times were the great stronghold of Free Church principles, were almost unanimously opposed to Disestablishment. Many prominent Free Churchmen, both Liberal and Conservative, foresaw that by lending itself to play the game of the English sectaries and secularists, the Free Church would forfeit the hold which it had on the Christian feeling of the country. Others, who viewed the course that it was taking from a standpoint of prudence rather than of principle, had no difficulty in discerning that a serious blunder had been committed. If the Church of Scotland were to be disestablished, there would be no *raison d'être* of a Free Church; the claim to support which it now boasts, on the ground of being untrammelled by connection with the State, would cease to have any meaning; and it would with difficulty maintain its ground against the energy and resources which the Church of Scotland, even if disestablished, would be able to bring to bear

upon its work. In short, even in the opinion of many of its own supporters, the Free Church has lost more in character and credit by committing itself to the cause of Disestablishment than can be recouped to it by even the most complete attainment of its aims.

But the Scottish Liberationists have not been wholly to blame for the position in which they have been placed at the present moment. They have been made the tools of their political allies, as they have now to their mortification discovered. When Mr Gladstone began his canvass for Mid-Lothian, the Scottish Liberationists approached him in the hope that the destroyer of the Irish Church would be prepared to sympathise with their grievances. Nor were they disappointed. He held a private meeting with the leaders of the Disestablishment movement; and that they received no discouragement from him may be inferred from the fact that their efforts were from that time redoubled. More than that, we have good grounds for believing that had not Mr Gladstone been warned that any direct adhesion to Disestablishment would alienate from his party the support of Liberal Churchmen, the Church question would have occupied a much more prominent place in the last election campaign for Mid-Lothian. But then and since, all Mr Gladstone's ambiguous utterances have been intended to convey to the Scottish Liberationists the impression that he is with them in heart and sympathy. What he has constantly told them is—Give us a majority of electors in favour of Disestablishment, and trust us to do the business for you; but now that the agitators think they can muster such a majority, Mr Gladstone shrinks back in alarm, and tells

them they must not break up the Liberal party, but must wait for a more convenient season before pressing their aims.

Mr Gladstone, although he must have known that no credit would be attached to his assertion, has charged the Tory party with introducing the subject of Church Establishments into the present elections. From what we have said above, it will be seen that he himself has been chiefly to blame for making Church Establishment in Scotland a question of present urgency. Churchmen could afford to be indifferent so long as the attack against them was directed by Mr Dick Peddie or Dr Cameron; but when the Scottish Dissenters were discovering in Mr Gladstone's attitude sufficient encouragement to stimulate their activity, it was high time to act on the defensive. His studied ambiguity on his recent appearance in Edinburgh is not calculated to lull Churchmen into any false sense of security,—although Principal Caird and a few others who are Liberals first and Churchmen afterwards, may find it convenient to keep peace with their party for Mr Gladstone's sake even at the expense of their principles,—or to discourage the Liberationists from pressing their suit. His counsel on the question comes to this: Do not press the question of Disestablishment, at the risk of splitting the unity of the Liberal party and of losing votes. Return us with a majority strong enough to crush both Tory opposition and Irish obstruction, and you may confidently depend on us for justice. Churchmen, however, cannot depend on Mr Gladstone, and Dissenters will not; and so he has been obliged in Scotland to encounter the difficulty which he

himself has been mainly instrumental in creating.

We have heard a great deal about justice from the party of Disestablishment, and we must call attention to the justice which is being meted out to the Church of Scotland in selecting her for attack at the present time. It is only eleven years since the Church freed herself from the last and gravest of her disabilities, and her progress in the interval has borne testimony to a vigour and vitality which must have astonished her foes as much as it has delighted her friends. In the course of these eleven years the number of communicants on the rolls of the Established Church has increased from 460,000 to 555,622—an increase so remarkable as to justify the belief that the Church is only entering upon a new and more extended field of national usefulness, which she will worthily follow up if allowed to hold on her way unmolested. We regret that we are unable to give complete statistics of the new churches which have been built and endowed during the same period; but we are certain that these would afford a testimony not less remarkable to the energy with which the Church Establishment is serving the religious interests of Scottish Presbyterianism. Between 1860 and 1877 the Church of Scotland erected 341 new parishes at a cost of £1,150,000. Deprived as its clergy have been of the power of exercising that influence over national education which for two centuries had been so beneficial to Scotland, they have now thrown themselves all the more earnestly into the work of religious instruction. The returns of the Church of Scotland Sunday-schools for last year show that 254,676 pupils were receiving religious training

under the care of the Established clergy, an increase of 12,228 on the numbers of the previous year. We need not enumerate the successful Mission works carried on by the Church abroad, nor the numerous schemes of practical philanthropy in which it is engaged at home; these speak for themselves, and offer a testimony to the utility and activity of the Church which the advocates of Disestablishment will find difficult to refute.

Holy Scripture tells us that it is one of the privileges of the poor to "have the Gospel preached to them." This is the privilege of which the Liberationists would now seek to deprive them. We have no wish to say anything uncharitable regarding the Dissenting bodies; but, as a matter of fact, they do not preach the Gospel to the poor. A Voluntary Church must be sustained; its clergy must be fed; and the member who can contribute most liberally to its funds is naturally held in higher estimation than the poor man who cannot pay for a pew, and who accordingly feels himself in the position of a pauper in the midst of his fellow-worshippers. And we fear that it is too often the case that he is made to realise his position. To him, however, the door of the Established Church stands open; he has a legal right to worship there; its clergy are bound to extend to him all the benefits of their ministerial offices; and his independence is not compromised, although he may not be able to put a shilling into the offertory from one year's end to the other. The Liberationists clamour for justice: to secure what they consider justice to themselves, they are urging the State to commit a very grave injustice to the large class in Scotland that

we are alluding to. The lower-middle class, who in Scotland constitute the strength of the Free and U.P. Churches, are able and willing to support the denominations which they most favour; but that is no reason why their poorer brethren should be deprived of the means of worship, and of the rites of a Christian Church. In Scotland the natural result of Disestablishment will be a vast addition to the number of the lapsed masses, and an inroad of secularism to occupy the ground from which the Church of Scotland is to be driven.

It is, we fear, useless to warn the Dissenters who have thrown in their lot with the Liberationists that they are playing with fire. They are associating with dangerous allies, who would be quite as well pleased to stamp out Christianity as represented by the Free and U.P. Churches as to do an ill turn to the Church of Scotland, if they only had the power of doing so. When secularism is making such progress, it is false policy to seek to cut away any support, whether public or private, of which a Christian Church may be possessed. The Free and U.P. Churches can scarcely emerge from the present conflict without experiencing the natural consequences of having touched pitch. They have merged their ecclesiastical position in political agitation, and exchanged the pulpit for the hustings. But nothing is more fickle than the political feeling of the masses, as our elections are constantly testifying; and though the Dissenting Churches may carry the sentiments of their flocks with them on this occasion, can they count upon being able to do so on every question that may come before the country? Will the Dissenting clergy always be able to com-

bine the respect due to their sacred office and the obedience demanded by the political agitator, as on this occasion? If not, their position is one of peril. They will find that the maelstrom of politics swallows up all other interests, and regret the hour when they abandoned the concerns of a Kingdom which is not of this world, to pursue sectarian antipathies and promote party aims.

Clumsy magicians in olden times used to pay a heavy penalty when they raised a devil without being able to lay him again. A similar fate must befall the Liberal party whenever it openly adopts the Liberationist programme. It may in its immediate state of alarm endeavour to banish the question to the background at the present elections; but it will ultimately have to expiate the encouragement which it has already given to the movement. The Church of Scotland never raised the question of Disestablishment; but it has never shrunk from submitting its position to the verdict of the people. It has met every attack made upon it with a bold frankness indicative of a well-founded assurance of the hold it possesses of the nation. And as often as it has faced its opponents they have retreated before it. They sought to show that the Established Church was the Church of a minority; but when the Establishment proposed a religious census, its enemies shrank from the test. In the course of a fortnight, 650,000

signatures were procured for a petition against Mr Dick Peddie's Disestablishment Bill, of which 150,000 represented members of other Churches. It is not merely inside the Establishment that the union of Church and State is appreciated in Scotland. Intelligent and liberal-minded men of all denominations, who view with apprehension the onward sweep of the great wave of secularism, are prepared to make a struggle for preserving the Christian character of the State, and to such men mere sectarian differences are of little moment compared with the greater question at issue. If the Dissenting bodies who have been most active in forcing on the question of Disestablishment were not blinded by their rancour to the dictates of common prudence, they would understand that their present course of action is tending to impel a large number of their own supporters towards the Church which they are seeking to overthrow.

If any new argument were wanted to prove the necessity which exists in Scotland for an Established Church as a means of conserving the pure principles of Christian teaching, it would, we regret to say, be supplied by the Dissenting bodies themselves which are now heading the attack. We need a Church capable of reminding the people that envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness are alien to the Christian verities, even when they are cloaked under the specious disguise of a plea for justice.

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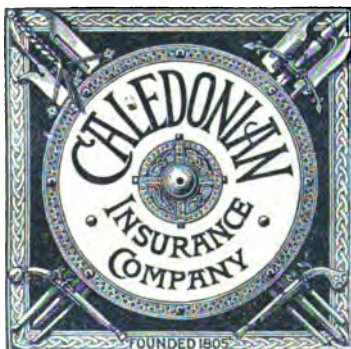
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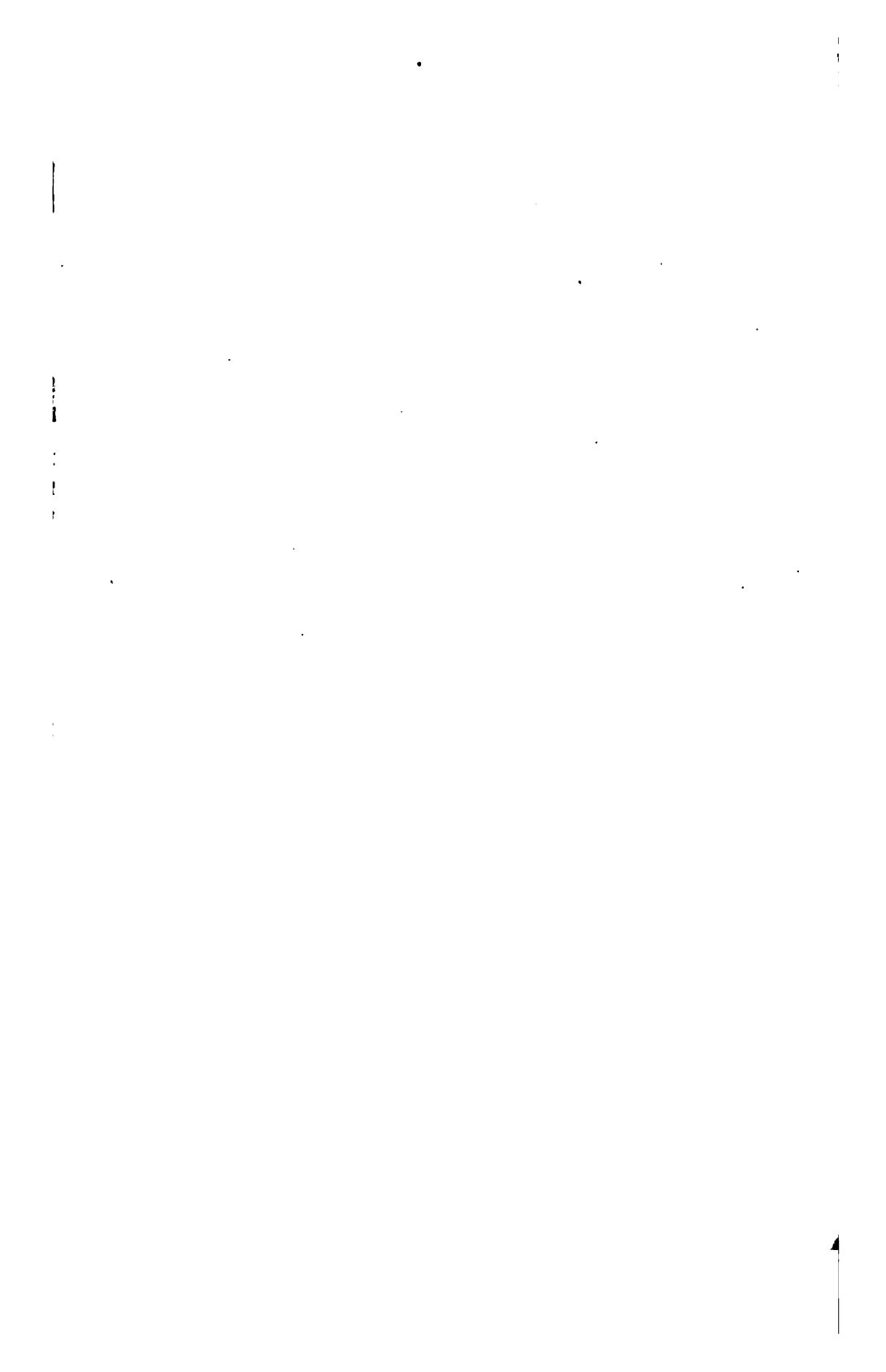
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